Khadija tul Kubra

A Short Story of Her Life

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Khadijatul Kubra, A Short Story of Her Life

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:Published in print

Tahrike Tarsile Quran

:Digital Publisher

Ghaemiyeh center of computerized researches

Contents

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BOOK ID

Author(s): Sayyid Ali Ashgar Razwy

Publisher(s): Tahrike Tarsile Quran

Category: Early Islamic History

Person Tags: Lady Khadija

point

A Short story of Lady Khadijah's life. Her family tree, early life, marriage to the Prophet (s), generosity, status, and role in the events of early Islamic history.

The Family Tree

:Image

Map of Arabia

:Image

Introduction

Khadija, the first wife of Muhammad Mustafa, the Messenger of Allah, (may Allah bless him and his Ahlul-Bayt), and the first Believer, evokes a most extraordinary personality. She played a stellar role in the history of nascent Islam. She was, with Abu Talib, one of the two greatest benefactors of Islam and the Muslims. At a time when Islam was under unremitting predation pressure; and was, for three years, in a state of unrelenting siege, she bailed it out, by her incredible sacrifices. Her constancy, her tenacity, her vision, and her indomitable faith in Allah, and in the mission of Muhammad Mustafa - His Last and the Greatest Messenger - were the sine qua non as the underpinnings of Islam during the first ten years of its existence.

For some mysterious reason, Khadija's role – so central in shaping the destiny of Islam – has not received the recognition to which it is entitled, from most of the Muslim biographers and historians. Such recognition as they have given it, is, at best, perfunctory and tentative. To the best of my knowledge and belief, a standard biography of Khadija has not been published yet. This is a

most lamentable lack in the inspirational literature of Islam, especially at a time when, in the West, there is growing interest in Islam as a creed, and in the story of the .respective roles of its various protagonists in its early days

The material which is extant on the life of Khadija in various sources, is scanty and fragmentary. Even this scanty and fragmentary material is not free from stereotypical interpretations or misinterpretations of history. The biographer or the historian must create a sensitized climate of authentic understanding of Islam, and he must make an evenhanded assessment of the roles of those personages who shaped its history. Khadija is one of the most dynamic and vital personages in the entire history of Islam. It is impossible to tell the story of Islam without telling the story of the contribution .she made to its survival, its consolidation, and its eventual triumph

!Islam owes Khadija an unpayable debt

Therefore, I believe that the publication of a biography of Khadija - reflecting scientific spirit and scientific principles - which at one time I envisioned as a necessity, .now confronts the Muslim biographers and historians as an overwhelming imperative

Another reason why all Muslims should have access to the life-story of Khadija, is, that like her husband, Muhammad Mustafa, may Allah bless him and his Ahlul-Bayt, she too is a symbol of the unity of his umma. She is a symbol that fosters unity of the .Muslim umma

An attempt has been made in this book to put together

whatever material on the life of Khadija was available in numerous scattered sources. But it is an attempt which, it must be conceded, is hopelessly inadequate. It purports to be a mere outline – to be referred to only until such time as more authoritative works on the subject become available. Nevertheless, it is essential for all Muslims, but especially for the Muslim women, to be familiar with the story of the life of Khadija and her work for Islam. She blended her personality with the personality of Islam so .thoroughly that she became its heart and core

.Khadija literally lived and died for Islam

If Muslim women are in search of happiness in this world, and salvation in the Hereafter, they must live in imitation of the sainted life of Khadija. She is the "guardian" of the secret of winning the pleasure of Allah; and she is the "custodian" of the key that will unlock for them, the gates of success in the two worlds. She would be glad to share the "secret" with them, if they want to know what it is; and she would be .glad to put the "key" in their hands, if they would seek it from her

.May Allah bless Khadija and her family

Chapter ۱: Makka in the Sixth Century

Makka in the sixth century AD. was an important emporium in Arabia. It was at the crossroads of international commerce and trade. Cargoes coming from India such as spices, fruits, grain, ceramics and textiles, were unloaded at the ports of Yemen, and

were carried from there, with the produce of Southern Arabia itself, such as coffee, medicinal herbs, aromatics, and perfumes, by camel caravans to Makka, and thence, .to Syria and through Syria to the Mediterranean world

Makka itself was the destination of many of the caravans of the "Incense Road" of Arabia and of the "Spice Road" of India. Other caravans passed through Makka and Yathrib on their way to various destinations in the north where they made a link-up .with the caravans of the Silk Road of China

The caravans coming from the north, also halted in Makka. They changed their camels and horses, replenished their supplies and then marched on to the ports in the .south of the peninsula, on the Arabian Sea

Makka was also a center for the exchange of goods and commodities, both for the sedentary and nomadic Arabian tribes; and it was a point of distribution of agricultural produce and manufactured goods to the hinterland of Hijaz. The tribesmen came from as far away as central Arabia and even eastern Arabia, to buy those goods which were not available in their territories. Most of this inter-tribal trade was carried .on in Makka by the barter system

The Quraysh of Makka was the most important tribe of Western Arabia. All its members were merchants. By providing trans-shipment of silk from China, produce from East Africa and treasures from India - the Quraysh dominated trade between .the civilizations of the East and those of the Mediterranean

Clearly much of this trade was

in luxury goods but ordinary goods were traded too, such as purple cloth, clothing, plain, embroidered or interwoven with gold, saffron, muslin, cloaks, blankets, sashes, .fragrant ointments, wine and wheat

In this manner, the production, sale, exchange and distribution of goods had made the Quraysh quite rich. But there was one more thing to make them rich. Makka housed the Kaaba with its famous Black Stone. The Arabs came to Makka to perform pilgrimage at the Kaaba. For them, Makka held the same sanctity that Jerusalem did .for the Jews and the Christians

Kaaba was the pantheon of the idols of the various Arabian clans and tribes. The pilgrims brought rich and exotic offerings with them for the idols they worshipped. When the pilgrims left Makka to return to their homes, the priests of the pantheon appropriated all the offerings for themselves. The pilgrim traffic was a very lucrative .source of revenue for the citizens of Makka

If the Quraysh of Makka did not engage in trade for themselves, they would still become rich merely by providing the vast range of services, which they did, on a year-round basis, to the caravans - both northbound and southbound - and to the pilgrims. But many of them were enterprising merchants as noted before, and brought much .wealth to Makka from the neighboring countries

Though the merchants of Makka sent only one caravan to Syria and one to Yemen in the whole year, there were numerous other little caravans which plied between various points within the

Arabian peninsula throughout the year. Most of them either originated in Makka or .they passed through Makka. Therefore, the caravan traffic in Makka was quite brisk

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The caravans varied in size. They ranged from "local" caravans of as few as ten camels to "international" caravans of as many as thousands of camels. The .organization of caravans was a major industry in Arabia

Chapter ۲: Early Life

point

Khadija was born in Makka. She was the daughter of Khuwayled bin Asad bin Abdul Uzza bin Qusayy. Qusayy was the common progenitor of her line as well as the line of Muhammad Mustafa of the clan of Bani Hashim, and the future Prophet of Islam (may Allah bless him and his Ahlul Bayt). She thus belonged to a collateral branch of the Bani Hashim. Next to Bani Hashim itself, her family was the noblest and the most honorable in all Arabia. Her family was distinguished not only by its opulence but also .by the content of its character

Khuwayled, the father of Khadija, was, like most other members of the tribe of the Quraysh of Makka, also a merchant. Like most of them, he too had made a fortune

in foreign trade. The merchants of Makka put together two caravans every year – one in summer and one in winter. They sent the "summer caravan" to Syria and the ."winter caravan" to Yemen

These caravans carried the produce of the desert, and the goods manufactured in Makka and the surrounding areas, and sold them in the markets of Syria and Yemen. They also sold pedigreed horses in Syria. These horses were valued very highly in Syria and in the neighboring countries. After selling their merchandize and their horses, the traders bought grain, olive oil, fruits, coffee, textiles, luxury goods and other manufactured items for sale in Makka. They thus made profit at both ends of .the journey

This trade of Makka has been referred to in Quran Majid in Sura Quraysh, the ۱۰۶th) .(chapter

Foreign trade was the entire basis of the economic life of Makka. Makka had neither .arable lands nor water for irrigation

The Makkans, therefore, could not grow their own food. To feed themselves, they depended upon their trade with Syria and Yemen. With the profits they made in their .trade, they bought grain and other necessities of life

Each caravan had a leader. This leader had to be a man of some exceptional qualities. Upon his judgment and decisions depended the physical safety and the success of the caravan in its business of selling and buying. He was responsible for protecting the caravan from the brigands and the predators of the desert. This he did by recruiting warriors from various

tribes, and by forming a squad or squads out of them, depending upon the size of the caravan. This squad accompanied the caravan to its destination. All caravans bound .for distant destinations travelled under military escort

The caravan-leader also had to be gifted with a "sixth sense" to guide him in the trackless desert during the day, and he had to have the ability to determine directions at night. He, therefore, had to have the knowledge of the relative position of the stars. He also had to assure beforehand the availability of water during the long journey north to Syria or south to Yemen. He also had to take precautionary measures against such unforeseen hazards as sand-storms and flash floods. He also had to have the ability to administer "first aid" to a traveller if he became sick or was injured. In other words, he had to be a man capable of handling any emergency. The merchants of Makka, therefore, selected a leader for their caravans after thoroughly investigating his antecedents. A screening panel of experienced travellers appraised all candidates .for the post

The panel was not satisfied by anything less than the proven ability of a candidate to "navigate" skillfully in the uncharted "sea" of sand, and his success in bringing the convoys of the "ships of the desert," (= the camels), and their cargoes, home safely. To be acceptable to the panel, a candidate had to show that he had thorough familiarity with the logistics of the caravans; and his

.credentials" had to be impeccable"

Khadija's mother had died in or around AD. ۵۷۵; and Khuwayled, her father, died in or around A.D. ۵۸۵. Upon his death, his children inherited his fortune, and divided it among themselves. Wealth has its own perils. It can tempt one to live a life of idleness and luxury. Khadija subconsciously understood the ambivalent character of wealth, and made up her mind not to let it make her an idler. She was endowed with such extraordinary intelligence and force of character that she overcame the challenge of prosperity, and decided to build an empire upon her patrimony. She had many siblings but among all of them, she alone had "inherited" their father's ability to become rich. But she demonstrated very soon that even if she had not inherited a fortune from her .father, she would have made one for herself

After the death of Khuwayled, Khadija took charge of the family business, and rapidly expanded it. With the profits she made, she helped the poor, the widows, the orphans, the sick and the disabled. If there were any poor girls, Khadija married them off, and gave them dowry. One of her uncles acted as her adviser in business matters, and other members of the family also assisted her in the management of business if and when she sought their assistance. But she didn't depend upon anyone else to make her decisions. She trusted her own judgment even though she welcomed advice and considered it. The senior members

.of her family knew that one thing she didn't like was paternalism

Most of the traders who had cargo to sell in Syria or Yemen, travelled with the caravans to oversight all transactions in person. But there were occasions when a trader was unable to leave Makka. In such an event, he engaged a man to go in his stead, with the caravan. The man chosen for this purpose, had to be one with good reputation for his probity and for his sound business sense. Such a man was called an .agent or a manager

Khadija herself was a homebody and her brothers and cousins also did not show any interest in travelling with the caravans. She, therefore, recruited an agent whenever a caravan was outfitted to go abroad, and made him responsible for carrying her .merchandize to the foreign markets and for selling it in those markets

By judicious selection of her agents, and by selling and buying at the right time and at the right place, she was able to make fantastic profits, and in due course, became the richest merchant in Makka. Ibn Sa'ad says in his Tabaqat that whenever caravans of the Makkan merchants set out on their journey, the cargo of Khadija alone was equal to the cargo of all other merchants of Quraysh put together. She had, it was obvious to everyone, the proverbial "golden touch." If she touched dust, it turned into gold. The citizens of Makka, therefore, bestowed upon her the title of the

.Princess of the Quraysh. They also called her the Princess of Makka

Arabia at this time was a pagan society, and the Arabs worshipped a multitude of idols and fetishes who, they believed, had the power to bring good fortune to them. But their idolatry was crude and primitive, and their habits, customs and characteristics were repulsive. Drunkenness was one of their many vices, and they were incorrigible gamblers. They were wallowing in a pit of error and ignorance. Quran Majid has borne :testimony to their condition in the following verse

It is He who has sent amongst the unlettered an apostle from among themselves, to" rehearse to them His signs, to sanctify them, and to instruct them in scripture and (wisdom, - although they had been, before, in manifest error." (Chapter ۶۲; verse ۲

But the country was not altogether devoid of individuals who found idolatry repugnant. These individuals, who were very few in number, were called "Hanifs," i.e., men and women "who had turned away from idol worship." Makka also had a sprinkling of these "hanifs," and some of them were in the clan of Khadija herself. One .of them was her first cousin, Waraqa bin Naufal

Waraqa was the eldest of all his siblings, and his hair had all turned grey. He castigated the Arabs for worshipping idols and for deviating from the true faith of their forebears - the prophets Ibrahim (Abraham) and Ismael. Ibrahim and Ismael had taught the lesson of Tawhid - the doctrine of the Unity of

the Creator. But the Arabs had forgotten that lesson, and had become polytheists. Waraqa despised them for their polytheism and their moral turpitude. He himself followed the religion of Prophet Ibrahim, the true and faithful slave of Allah. He never associated any partners) with Allah. He did not drink and he did not gamble. And he .was generous to the poor and the needy

One of the most hideous customs of the Arabs of the times was that they buried their female infants alive. Whenever Waraqa heard that someone intended to bury his daughter alive, he went to see him, dissuaded him from killing his daughter, and if the reason for the contemplated murder was poverty, he ransomed her, and brought her up as his own child. In most cases, the father later regretted his error, and came to claim his daughter. Waraqa exacted from him a pledge to love his daughter, and to .treat her well, and only then let him take her back

Waraqa lived in the twilight of the pagan world. That world was soon going to be flooded with the Light of Islam - the Religion of Allah, par excellence - the Pristine Faith, first promulgated, many centuries earlier, by Ibrahim (Abraham), the Friend and Messenger of Allah. Allah had already chosen His slave, Muhammad Mustafa ibn Abdullah, of the clan of Bani Hashim, to be His new and His last Messenger to the world. The latter was living in Makka at the same time as Waraqa but

.had not proclaimed his mission yet

Waraqa was one of the very few people in Makka who were educated. He is reported to have translated the Bible from Hebrew into Arabic. He had also read other books written by the Jewish and Christian theologians. He was a desperate seeker of truth in the darkness of a world growing darker, and longed to find it before his own death, .but did not know how

Khadija was strongly influenced by the ideas of Waraqa, and she shared his contempt for the idols and the idolaters. She did not associate any partners) with the Creator. Like Waraqa and some other members of the family, she too was a follower of the .prophets Ibrahim and Ismael

!(Khadija was a Muwahhid (monotheist

What Khadija did not know at this time was that within a few years, her destiny was going to be intertwined with the destiny of Muhammad Mustafa, the apostle of .Monotheism (Tawhid); and with the destiny of Islam, the creed of Monotheism

Arabia, before Islam, had no political organization in any form, and had no basic structure of any kind. There were no courts or police or a system of justice. Therefore, there was no apparatus to control crime, or to inhibit criminals. If an Arab committed a crime, he didn't feel any remorse. Instead, he boasted that he was capable of being .utterly reckless, brutal and ruthless

The whole peninsula was a masculine-dominated society. A woman had no status ,whatsoever. Many Arabs believed that women were bringers of bad luck. In general

they treated women more like chattel than like individuals. A man could marry any number of women he liked. And when he died, his eldest son "inherited" all of them except his own mother. In other words, he married all his step-mothers. Such a thing as a code of ethics simply did not exist to inhibit him in any way. Islam placed this foul .practice under proscription

The pre-Islamic Arabs were semi-savages. An Arab spent his life in lawless warfare. Killing and plundering were his favorite professions. He tortured his prisoners of war to death, and torturing animals was one of his favorite pastimes. He had a perverse sense of honor which led him to kill his own infant daughters. If his wife gave birth to a .daughter, he was unable to conceal his anguish and displeasure

When news is brought to one of them, of (the birth of) a female (child), his face" !darkens, and he is filled with inward grief

With shame does he hide himself from his people, because of the bad news he has had! Shall he retain it on (sufferance and) contempt, or bury it in the dust? Ah! What an (evil (choice) they decide on." (Chapter ۱۶; Verses ۵۸, ۵۹

In most cases an Arab killed his daughter out of his fear that she would be made a prisoner in the inter-tribal wars, and therefore, a slave of the enemy, and her status as a slave would bring disgrace to his family and tribe. He

could also kill her out of his fear of poverty. He believed that his daughter would become an economic liability to him. Islam made the killing of children a capital .offence

Kill not your children for fear of want: We shall provide sustenance for them as well" (as for you. Verily the killing of them is a great sin." (Chapter. ۱۷; Verse ۳۱

There were also those Arabs who did not kill their daughters but they deprived them of all their rights. They figured that since their daughters, when married, would go to .other men's homes, they ought not to spend anything on them

It was such an environment in which Khadija was born, grew up and lived - an "anti-woman" environment.

From her home in Makka, Khadija controlled an ever-growing business which spread into the neighboring countries. What she had succeeded in achieving, would be remarkable in any country, in any age, and for anyone - man or woman. But her achievement becomes doubly remarkable when one takes into account the "anti-woman" orientation of the Arab society. This is proof of her ability to master her destiny by her intelligence, strength of will and force of character. Her compatriots acknowledged her achievements when they called her the princess of the Quraysh .and the princess of Makka, as noted before

But even more remarkably, Khadija also earned a third title. She was called "Tahira" which means "the pure one." Who bestowed the title of Tahira upon her? Incredibly, it was bestowed upon her by

the same Arabs who were notorious for their arrogance, conceit, vanity and male chauvinism. But Khadija's conduct was so consistently exemplary that it won ".recognition even from them, and they called her "the pure one

It was the first time in the history of Arabia that a woman was called the Princess of Makka and was also called Tahira. The Arabs called Khadija the princess of Makka because of her affluence, and they called her Tahira because of the immaculacy of her reputation. They were also aware that she was a highly cultivated lady. She was thus a personage of distinction even in the times before Islam - the Times of .Ignorance

It was inevitable that Khadija would attract the attention of the Arab nobles and princes. Many among them sent proposals of marriage to her. But she did not consider any of them. Many of these nobles and princes were persistent in seeking her hand in marriage. Not discouraged by her refusal, they sought out men and women of influence and prestige to intercede for them with her. But she still spurned them all. She perhaps didn't attach much importance to the guardians of the male-.dominated and "anti-woman" society

Khadija's refusal to accept the offers of marriage sent by the high and the mighty of Arabia, gave rise to much speculation as to what kind of man she would like to marry. It was a question that Khadija herself could not answer. But her destiny knew the answer; she would marry a

man who was not only the best in all Arabia but was also the very best in all creation. It was her destiny which prompted her to turn down offers of marriage sent by .commonplace mortals

(Chapter ٣: Muhammad Mustafa (S

Though Arabia did not have any government - national, regional or local - the city of Makka was dominated by the tribe of Quraysh, as noted before. Quraysh was composed of twelve clans. These clans shared responsibility for maintaining a .modicum of law and order in the city

One of the clans of Quraysh was Bani Hashim. Each clan had its own leader. The leader of Bani Hashim was Abu Talib ibn Abdul Muttalib ibn Hashim ibn Abd Manaf ibn Qusayy. Like his forefathers, Abu Talib was also a merchant. In addition to being the chief of the clan, he was also the guardian of the Kaaba - the House of Allah - built in Makka, many centuries earlier, by the prophets Ibrahim and Ismael, and dedicated by .them to the service of Allah Ta'ala

Abu Talib had a younger brother called Abdullah. In A.D. ٥٧٠, Abdullah went to Syria with a caravan. A few months before his departure to Syria, he had been married to .(Amina hint Wahab, a lady of Yathrib (Medina

On his return journey from Syria, Abdullah fell ill and died. He was only ١٧ years old at his death. When he left Makka, his wife was pregnant, and she was living in the house of her brother-in-law, Abu Talib. Two months

after the death of Abdullah, her child – a boy – was born. His grandfather, Abdul Muttalib, gave him the name Muhammad. Muhammad was born on June ٨, ٥٧٠, in the .house of his uncle, Abu Talib, in Makka

The infant Muhammad was, some day, going to be handpicked by Allah Ta'ala to be His Messenger to the whole world, and he was going to change the destiny and the .history of mankind forever

Muhammad was six years old when his mother, Amina the daughter of Wahab, died, after a brief illness. Upon her death, his grandfather, Abdul Muttalib, took him to his .home. But only two years had passed when Abdul Muttalib also died

Abdul Muttalib had ten sons. When he was on his deathbed, he called all of them, and designated his son, Abu Talib, as the new chief of the clan of Bani Hashim. He also made Abu Talib the guardian of Muhammad. Both Abu Talib and Abdullah, the father of Muhammad, were the sons of the same mother, whereas Abdul Muttalib's other .sons were born of his other wives

Abu Talib brought Muhammad into his house. Muhammad came, he saw and he conquered – all. Abu Talib and his wife lavished all their love upon him. They loved him more than they loved their own children. Muhammad was born in their house. His birth in their house had made it a house of many blessings; and now, after the death .of Abdul Muttalib, he had returned to it

When Muhammad was

a child, he didn't show any interest in the toys and the frolics of children. In his boyhood, he didn't show any interest in games and sports, or in the company of other .boys of his own age. As young as he was, he preferred solitude to company

Like other members of the tribe of Quraysh, Abu Talib also sent his merchandize to Syria and to Yemen every year. Sometimes he went in person with the caravans, and at other times, he engaged an agent who sold his merchandize in the markets of .those countries

In A.D. ۵۸۲ Abu Talib decided to visit Syria with a caravan. His nephew, Muhammad, was ۱۲ years old at this time. Abu Talib loved him so much that he could not bear to part company with him even for a few months. He, therefore, took him to Syria with .him

Muhammad was a precocious boy, and notwithstanding his extreme youth, was a highly gifted observer. In course of his journey and during his sojourn in Syria, he carefully observed the people and their customs, mores, modes of worship, costumes, speeches and dialects. And whatever he saw, he remembered. Upon his return to Makka, he could recreate his experience from beginning to end, and he could recollect all his observations in vivid and graphic detail. He never forgot anything; in fact, he had "total recall." And though he was young in years, he was mature in wisdom and in plain common sense. Abu Talib was aware that Muhammad

was wise and intelligent beyond his years and his experience. He, therefore, did not .treat him like a minor but showed him all the respect due to an adult in Arab society

Soon young Muhammad entered his teens. Though now on the threshold of young manhood, he still didn't take any interest in the pleasures that other young men seek. He eschewed levity of all kinds and as noted before, he preferred to be alone with his thoughts. He had the opportunity to satisfy this predilection when he grazed the sheep of his uncle. He was all alone under the immense vault of the sky. The silent and the brooding desert rolled up to the horizons, and seemed to encourage and to invite him to reflect upon the wonders of creation, the mysteries of heaven and earth, and the meaning and purpose of life. He surveyed the landscape from horizon to horizon, and it appeared to him as if a vast, cosmic solitude was the only "presence" to keep .him company. Solitude to him appeared to be a new "dimension" of his world

By the time Muhammad was out of his teens, the people of Makka had begun to take notice of him. They knew that he never deviated from rectitude, and he never erred. They also noted that he didn't talk much but when he did, he spoke only the truth, and he spoke only the words of wisdom. Since the Makkans had never heard him utter a falsehood, they called

.(him "Sadiq" (=the Truthful

Within a few more years, the citizens of Makka were going to bestow another title upon Muhammad. Knowing that he was highly conscientious, many of them began to deposit their cash, their jewelry and ornaments, and other valuables with him for safe-keeping. Whenever anyone wanted his deposits back, Muhammad returned them to him. There never was an occasion when any repayment went by default. After such experience with him, over several years, they began to call him "Amin" .(=the Trustworthy). He and he alone was called Sadiq and Amin by the Makkans

A. Yusuf Ali, the translator and commentator of Quran Majid, has explained the word :Amin as follows

Amin = one to whom a trust has been given, with several shades of meaning implied:" e.g., (۱) worthy of trust, (۲) bound to deliver his trust, as a prophet is bound to deliver his Message, (۳) bound to act entirely as directed by the trust, as a prophet is bound to give only the Message of Allah, and not add anything of his own, and (۴) not seeking ".any interest of his own

The pre-Islamic Arabs held every year a "season of fairs" in various parts of the country. Some of these fairs were held in Makka or in the environs of Makka. Well-known among them were the fairs of Ukkaz, Majanna and Dhul-Majaz. Muhammad .visited these fairs whenever it was convenient for him to do so

All these fairs were held in the four sacred months of Rajab, Dhil-Qaada, Dhil-Hajj

and Moharram, according to ancient Arab tradition. During these four months, there was a total embargo on all kinds of violence, warfare, plunder and brigandage. At the very beginning of the "season of peace," a general truce went into effect. This truce .was recognized and respected by all Arabian tribes

Merchants, farmers and craftsmen gathered at these fairs from far and near to sell, to buy and to exchange. They brought the best of their products with them, and proudly exhibited them. The other arts of peace, poetry among them, were cultivated .during the suspension of hostilities

Poetry was the first love of the Arabs. If poetic talent was discovered in any tribe, it was an occasion, for each and all, to celebrate. The other tribes, friendly to it, presented their congratulations to it, for producing such talent. The Arabs were great aficionados of Arabic words and the multiple nuances of their meanings. They called ".themselves the "sons of Arabic

In these fairs the poets read their latest compositions, and held their audience spell-bound with the "pyrotechnics" of their eloquence. Eloquence was an attribute which the Arabs treasured as paramount in importance. One of their maxims was that the beauty of a woman is in her face; but the beauty of a man in his eloquence. They admired the skill of construction in an ode as much as the poet's felicity of expression. Weird-looking mystics of the desert and wild-looking soothsayers and the oracles of the tribes, regaled their audience with their

cryptic speeches, parables and their esoteric prognostications, even though few, if .any, could understand their language of symbolisms

Most Arabs believed that astral influence determined man's fate. The soothsayers, therefore, were held in great awe in the whole country; it was believed that they had the power to commune with the stars. Singers, dancers, entertainers, acrobats and .magicians, all vied with each other for the attention of the public

These fairs were also frequented by the saints, priests and holy men who preached their doctrines. They were all free to propagate their creeds and their ideas without fear of molestation from anyone during these four months. Peace and the arts of .peace flourished against this panorama of untamed human vitality

In these fairs, Muhammad found an opportunity to observe a cross-section of the inhabitants of the Arabian peninsula. He also studied, at first hand, the customs and .beliefs of the people of different social, cultural and geographical backgrounds

In the spring of A.D. ۵۹۵, the merchants of Makka "assembled" their summer caravan to carry their merchandize to Syria. Khadija also had her merchandize ready but she had not found a man who would take charge of it as her agent. A few names were .suggested to her but she did not consider them satisfactory

Through some of his colleagues in the merchants' "guild" of Makka, Abu Talib learned that Khadija was in need of an agent who would take her cargo with the caravan to .Syria and would sell it there

It occurred to Abu

Talib that his nephew, Muhammad, who was now ۲۵ years old, would qualify for the job. He was anxious to find employment for him. He knew that he (Muhammad) had no experience as an agent but he also knew that he (Muhammad) would more than make up for such a lack by his exceptional talents. He had faith in the capacities and faculties of his nephew, and was confident that he had enough savvy to handle his responsibilities and duties as an agent to the entire satisfaction of his employer. Therefore, with his (Muhammad's) tacit agreement, he called on Khadija, and broached with her the subject of his (Muhammad's) candidacy, as her new agent.

Like most of the other citizens of Makka, Khadija had also heard about Muhammad. One thing she knew that she could not question, was his integrity. She sensed that she could trust Muhammad implicitly and explicitly. She therefore readily agreed to appoint him (Muhammad) as her agent. She did not consider his lack of experience a handicap, and said that she would, in any case, send her slave, Maysara - an experienced traveller - with him to assist him in his duties.

Khadija was a superb administrator and a consummate organizer. But she was also lucky. She had always been lucky in finding good agents for her business. Even though she was "success-oriented," she was soon surprised to discover that with Muhammad as her agent, her luck soared as it had never done before. For Khadija, there never

was in the past, and there never was going to be in the future, an agent like Muhammad. If she had the "golden touch" in her hand, he had the "blessed touch" in .his

Khadija and Abu Talib worked out the details of the new arrangement. And when Muhammad called on his new employer to sign the contract, she explained to him the specifics of the trade. He immediately grasped what she told him, and didn't ask any questions seeking clarification. Khadija told Abu Talib that the recompense she would pay to Muhammad for his services, would be the double of what she had paid to her .other agents in the past

What Khadija didn't know at this time was that it was the hand of destiny which was working behind this arrangement. Destiny had other plans for her and for Muhammad. Those plans transcended such mundane and picayune matters as .making profit in a business enterprise, as events were very soon to show

In the meantime, the "summer caravan" of the Makkan merchants had been equipped, and was ready for departure on its long journey. The merchants brought their cargo out of the warehouses to be loaded on camels. The documents were prepared and were signed. Provisions were taken, and guides and the escorts were engaged. At the appointed time, Muhammad arrived with Abu Talib and his other uncles. They were greeted by an uncle of Khadija who was awaiting them with the ."Bill of Lading" and the other documents

Muhammad had to

take inventory of the merchandize that he was going to sell in Syria. With Maysara, he checked all items against the manifest, and found everything in order. Maysara had to .do the paperwork relating to the sales and purchases. He was the record-keeper

Abu Talib gave special instructions to Maysara and to the leader of the caravan regarding the comfort and safety of Muhammad. They promised to do everything to make the journey pleasant and safe for him. Abu Talib and his brothers thanked them for showing solicitude for Muhammad's welfare. They prayed for his success in the new venture, and for his safe return. Then they committed him to the protection of .Allah, and bade him farewell

During summer, most caravans travelled at night to escape the murderous heat of the day, and they rested during the day. Travel during the day could be extremely exhausting both for the riders and for their camels and horses. Most caravans, therefore, left Makka "with the declining day," as the Arabs said, or when the sun had .passed the zenith, and the heat was a little less oppressive

Presently one of the outriders of the caravan rang a bell. The bell alerted all travellers that the caravan was ready to march. The crouching camels were made to stand, much against their will, and they showed their displeasure by protesting and snorting but took their position in the long train. About three hours before sunset, the leader of the caravan gave a signal, and the caravan

.was set in motion

The caravan headed toward the north. The folks and the friends of the travellers lingered for some more time waving at them and watching, as the caravan receded into the distance. When the last camel disappeared beyond the hills, they also .dispersed, and went to their homes

The new travellers rode pillion with the experienced travellers who showed them the sights which were familiar to them, and explained their peculiarities to the former. Maysara pointed out many interesting sights to Muhammad. The latter also recognized all the landmarks that he had seen on the road which he had traversed ١٣ .years earlier with his uncle

Nothing had changed in those ١٣ years. Maysara proved to be a lively companion who could tell many pertinent stories and could recount numerous interesting incidents from his earlier travels. Muhammad found that other travellers were also cordial and .friendly

After nearly a month, the caravan arrived at its destination in Syria. Billeting arrangements had already been made for the weary travellers in an inn, and they all wanted to rest after enduring the rigors of a month-long journey over difficult terrain .and in searing heat. They could take as much as a week to recuperate their vitality

When the merchants had rested their aching limbs and were refreshed once again, they went into the market-place to dispose of the goods which they had brought from Makka. Some of it they sold against cash, and some of it they bartered for the Syrian goods. They

had also to buy merchandize for the home market, and they sought and found many profitable bargains. These transactions could take anywhere from two to four .months

Muhammad also sold his cargo and bought new cargo. Though for him it was his first commercial venture, he did not falter, from lack of experience, in conducting business transactions. In fact, he surprised Maysara by his "professionalism" in the trade. Maysara also noted his perspicacity as a negotiator and his acumen and probity as a salesman. Muhammad protected the interests of both his employer and his customers. And yet, he made more profit for Khadija than she had ever made ever since she had taken charge of her father's business at his death. And the cargo he bought in Syria for her, was superb in quality and was certain to fetch high prices in .Makka, as it did

In Syria whoever met Muhammad, was impressed by him. He had a striking .appearance that made him unforgettable to anyone who saw him once

Though Muhammad was busy in selling, in negotiating, in investigating the market, and in buying, Maysara noted that he nevertheless found time to be alone with himself. For Maysara, these silent sessions of Muhammad were rather mysterious, but he did not interrupt them. He didn't know it then that his young master was in the .habit of reflecting on the state and destiny of man

In Syria, Muhammad met many Christians and Jews. He had assumed that each of these two groups would be

monolithic." But to his surprise, they were not. Both of them were splintered into" many sub-groups, and the mode of worship of each of them was different from that of the others. Who among them was right and who was wrong? It was a question that intrigued Muhammad. The quest for an answer to this question, and other kindred .questions kept him awake at nights when everyone else had gone to sleep

Eventually, when all sale and purchase transactions were completed, and presents for families and friends were procured, the caravan returned to Makka. For the homesick travellers, homecoming is always an occasion for rejoicing. It's an occasion full of anticipation as one is going to meet one's loved ones whom one has missed for many months. The weary travellers cannot wait long enough to hear the merry laughter of their children, and they know that when that heavenly moment comes, they would not be able to withhold their tears, still less to conceal them. They know from long experience that there would be much laughter but also there would be many tears - the tears of joy. Laughter and Tears mixed freely on such blessed and .blissful occasions

The arrival of a caravan always generated much excitement in the city. It was, in fact, a festive occasion for everyone living in Makka and the surrounding areas. The "docks" where the "fleets" of the "ships of the desert" (i.e. the camels), unloaded their .passengers and cargo, were the scenes of great animation

Most of the citizens and even the roving, nomadic tribesmen, found the hustle and .bustle of a newly-arrived caravan a welcome change in the tempo of life

R.V.C. Bodley

The arrivals and departures of caravans were important events in the lives of the Meccans. Almost everyone in Mecca had some kind of investment in the fortunes of the thousands of camels, the hundreds of men, horses, and donkeys which went out with hides, raisins, and silver bars, and came back with oils, perfumes, and manufactured goods from Syria and Egypt and Persia, and with spices and gold from (the south. (The Messenger - the Life of Mohammed, ۱۹۴۶

People came to greet their loved ones who were returning home after an absence of six months. Many among them came with mixed feelings - feelings of hope mixed with feelings of fear. Once anyone left the city with a caravan, there was no way for his folks to know if they would ever see him alive again. Some travellers died on the long journey and were buried in places which were remote, and were inaccessible. Their .kith and kin could never visit their graves

And it was only when a caravan arrived that the Makkans could hear news of the world outside the peninsula. The Arabs lived in those days, very much in total isolation from the rest of the world. With that world, they had only one tangible link and that .was the caravan

Almost every Makkan invested money in the caravan trade. The rich

ones among them could visit foreign countries for extended periods of many months. But people with limited means had to stay home. They, therefore, gave their goods to a trustworthy agent to sell, and they gave him money to buy the goods which were in demand in Arabia but were available only in the markets of Syria, Yemen, Abyssinia and Egypt. When their agents brought those goods to Makka, they sold them and made a profit on their sales. It was a system which, after long years of experience, .they had found to be reasonably workable

The merchants and the agents in the caravans also brought back with them exotic gifts and presents for their folks and friends, as per ancient custom. Everyone was eager to see those gifts which conjured up before their eyes the pictures of the riches .of Syria and the luxury of the Persian and the Roman Empires

Upon entering Makka, Muhammad first went into the precincts of the Kaaba where he made the customary seven circuits, and then he went to see his employer. He gave her a detailed account of the journey and the business transactions he had conducted on her behalf. Later, he briefed his uncle, Abu Talib, on the highlights of his experience .as a trader

Maysara, the slave of Khadija, had his own story to tell her. He told her the story of the journey to and from Syria, and of the profits that Muhammad had made for her. But for him, far more

interesting than the story of a successful trading mission, was the character and the personality of Muhammad himself. He was full of admiration for Muhammad's talents as a businessman. He told Khadija that Muhammad's foresight was fail-safe; his judgment was infallible; and his perception was unerring. He also mentioned to her .Muhammad's affableness, his courtesy and his condescension

Khadija found the story fascinating, and she posed many questions to Maysara about her new steward, Muhammad. She probably would not be surprised at all if Maysara had told her that Muhammad was the most extraordinary individual he had ever seen .and who was capable of doing the most extraordinary things

On the following day, Waraqa bin Naufal came to see Khadija. He too wanted to hear the news that travellers brought from abroad. The news that interested him most was that of the old conflict between the Persian and the Roman Empires. Each of those empires wished to establish its own hegemony over the entire region called the "Fertile Crescent." It is also probable that like other citizens, Waraqa too had invested money in the export and import trade of Makka, and he wanted to know how the .caravan had fared business wise

Khadija told her cousin the whole story as she had heard it from Muhammad himself and from Maysara. She also mentioned that her new steward had made .unprecedented profits for her

Waraqa also talked with Maysara about the journey and about Muhammad. Maysara, however, wanted to talk only about Muhammad. Nothing else

.seemed to interest him, business transactions least of all

When Waraqa had heard the long story, he is said to have plunged into deep thought. After a long pause, he said to Khadija: "Judging by what you and Maysara have told me about Muhammad, and also judging from what I know about him, it seems to me that he has all the qualities, attributes, characteristics and potentialities of the messengers of God. He might, in fact, be destined to become one of them in the times ".to come

By peering into the darkness of pagan Arabia, Waraqa was enabled, perhaps by his prescience, to espy glimmerings of the Light of Islam, soon to appear on the horizon, .and in Muhammad perhaps he recognized the Bringer of that Light

Many books on the life of Muhammad Mustafa, the future Prophet of Islam (may Allah bless him and his Ahlul-Bayt) have recorded a number of miracles alleged to have taken place during his journey to, and his sojourn, in Syria. A. Yusuf Ali, the translator :and commentator of Quran Majid, writes as follows in this regard

No apostle performed any Miracle or showed forth any "Signs," except as God willed." God's Will (Mashiyat) is an all-wise, universal Plan, which is not formed for the benefit of one tribe or millat or of one age or country. The greatest Miracle in history was and is the Quran. We can apprehend its beauty and grandeur to-day as much as did the people of Mustafa's day, -even more, as

".our collective knowledge of nature and of God's creation has increased

Elsewhere, A. Yusuf Ali says: "The Signs sent to the holy Prophet Muhammad, were: (۱) the Ayats of the Quran, and (۲) his life and work, in which God's Plan and Purpose were ".unfolded

It appears that Muhammad's charm and charisma had worked upon Khadija also. Like Maysara, she too became his admirer, and how could anyone help but become his admirer. Khadija had known him to be a gentle, a modest, a quiet and an unobtrusive young man. She also knew that the Makkans called him Sadiq and Amin. And now he had revealed his ability as a businessman also. His proficiency and savvy were part of his charisma. Her new assessment of Muhammad, therefore, was that he was no mere starry-eyed dreamer but also was a practical man of affairs. This assessment prompted her decision to "draft" Muhammad as the manager of her business in all .future expeditions

Chapter ۴: The Marriage

The commercial expedition of Muhammad to Syria turned out to be the prelude of his .marriage with Khadija

The translator and commentator of Quran Majid, A. Yusuf Ali, poses the following :rhetorical question in this context

Can we wonder at Jacob's re-union with Joseph, or that of Moses with Aaron, or of" "?Muhammad Mustafa with the Lady Khadija

No. We cannot. It was the decree of Allah that two of his slaves - Muhammad and .Khadija - should be united in marriage, and they were

It is reported that one of the close friends

of Khadija was a high-born lady of Makka called Nafisa (or Nufaysa) the daughter of Munyah. She was aware that Khadija had turned down many proposals of marriage. At first she wondered if there was any man in Arabia who would come up to the standards set by her. She had discussed the matter many times with Khadija. Finally, she had one more discussion with her which convinced her that she (Khadija) was not impressed by any man's wealth or rank or power. What really impressed Khadija, her friend gathered, was character - a sterling character. ICltadija admired only a man of .ethical and moral principles

Nafisa (or Nufaysa) also happened to know that there was such a man in Makka and .his name was Muhammad

It is reported that one day Muhammad was returning home from the Kaaba when :Nafisa stopped him, and the following exchange took place between them

Nafisa: O Muhammad, you are a young man and you are single. Men who are much younger than you, are already married; some even have children. Why don't you ?marry

.Muhammad: I cannot afford to marry; I am not rich enough to marry

Nafisa: What would be your response if you could marry a woman of beauty, wealth, ?status and honor, notwithstanding your present poverty

?Muhammad: Who could be such a woman

.Nafisa: Such a woman is Khadija the daughter of Khuwayled

Muhammad: Khadija? How is it possible that Khadija would marry me? You know that many rich and powerful princes and chiefs of tribes proposed to

.her, and she rebuffed them all

Nafisa: If you are agreeable to marry her, you just say so, and leave the rest to me. I .shall arrange everything

Muhammad wished to inform his uncle and guardian, Abu Talib, about Nafisa's .demarche, and to consult him in the matter before giving her an answer

Abu Talib knew Khadija as well as he knew his own nephew. He welcomed Nafisa's suggestion. There was no doubt in his mind that Muhammad and Khadija would make the ideal couple. He, therefore, gave his blessings to the proposal of their marriage. Thereupon, Muhammad told Nafisa that her suggestion was acceptable to him and .that she had the authority to negotiate, on his behalf, his marriage with Khadija

Once Abu Talib had approved the match, he sent his sister, Safiya, to see Khadija, and to talk with her about the proposed marriage. In the meantime, Nafisa had already done the "groundwork," and Khadija was expecting a visitor from the house of her future in-laws. She cordially received Safiya, entertained her, and told her that she (Khadija) had selected her (Safiya's) nephew to be her (Khadija's) life-partner without any preconditions and reservations. Safiya was very happy with the success of her embassy. Before she left the house, Khadija gave her an elegant robe which she .accepted with many expressions of joy and gratitude

Abu Talib then decided to comply with the traditional formalities of marriage. He bought gifts for Khadija, and took his brothers, Abbas and Hamza, with him to her house

to formally present to her the proposal of the marriage of his nephew with her. Khadija accepted the gifts that Abu Talib had brought, and of course she accepted the proposal of marriage. The two parties immediately fixed a date for the auspicious .wedding

Abu Talib himself took charge of the preparations for the marriage of his beloved nephew. For the blessed occasion, he brought out all the heirlooms of the family and the sacred relics of his forefathers. These included the cloak and the staff of Abdul Muttalib, the late chief of Bani Hashim. The bridegroom put on the cloak and held the staff in his hand. Abu Talib put the black turban of his clan on his (the bridegroom's) head, and a ring of green agate on his finger. The ring, at one time, had belonged to .Hashim bin Abd Manaf bin Qusayy

The wedding party was made up of all the chiefs of Quraysh and the lords of Makka. The bridegroom rode a proud and prancing horse, and the young warriors of Bani Hashim brandished gleaming swords high above their heads as they escorted him from the house of Abu Talib to the house of Khadija. The women of the clan had gone ahead of the bridegroom, and were already being entertained in the house of the .bride

Khadija's house was illuminated by myriads of lamps. Inside the house, chandeliers hung on golden chains from the ceiling, and each chandelier held seven lamps. The .guests arrived in the amber dusk

The chief steward of Khadija's estates had formed a committee for the reception of the bridegroom and the distinguished guests. The members of this committee conducted them inside the house through a high-arched entrance to a rectangular hall whose walls were panelled with tiles and whose ceiling was gilded. They made .themselves comfortable on rugs and cushions

For this special occasion, Khadija had ordered a special outfit to be made for all her domestics - male and female. Men were handsomely arrayed in spangled turbans, scarlet tunics, and black sashes around their waists. Attached to their turbans were silk tassels of ivory hue. The girls were wearing decor-blending costumes which dripped with gold and spangles. They were wearing coronets on the head and ropes of pearls and rivers of crystals. Their hair, cascading from the head to the shoulders .and from the shoulders down to the waist, was braided with pearls

The decor of the chamber of the bride was exquisite and was in fact, unsurpassable in taste and skill. The hangings of silk and brocade in many delicate tints, draped the walls; and a white velvet carpet covered the floor. The smoke of incense rose from a .goblet of silver sparkling with diamonds, blue sapphires and balas rubies

Khadija, the bride, sat on a high dais placed under a richly embroidered canopy. She looked radiant and resplendent like the rising sun itself. On her head she was wearing a crown of gold and pearls of amazing orient and beauty. Her dress, in

subtle shades of crimson and green, was shot with gold, and was set with pearls and emeralds. There were two maids in personal attendance on her; each was wearing a .diadem of gold, an amethyst silken dress, and jewel-studded slippers

When all the guests had taken their seats, Abu Talib, the guardian of the bridegroom, :rose to read the sermon of marriage as follows

All glory and all praise to Allah, the Creator of Heavens and earth, and all thanks to Him for all His blessings, bounties and mercy. He sent us into this world in the posterity of Ibrahim and Ismael. He put us in charge of the Mosque and made us .guardians of His House, the Kaaba, which is a sanctuary for all His creatures

:After this exordium, Abu Talib continued

My nephew, Muhammad ibn Abdullah ibn Abdul Muttalib, is the best individual in all mankind in his intelligence, in wisdom, in purity of lineage, in purity of his personal life, and in distinction of family. He has all the markings of a man destined to be great. He is marrying Khadija the daughter of Khuwayled against a meher of four hundred pieces of gold. I declare Muhammad and Khadija husband and wife. May Allah bless .them both, and may He be their Protector

In his sermon, Abu Talib declared that the Bani Hashim were the heirs of Ibrahim and Ismael, and were the carriers of their heritage. They were, therefore, .uncontaminated by idolatry

When Abu Talib concluded his sermon, Waraqa bin Naufal rose

:to read the marriage sermon on behalf of the bride. He said

All praise and glory to Allah. We testify and we affirm that the Bani Hashim are just as you have claimed. No one can deny their excellence. Because of their excellence, we cherish the marriage of Khadija and Muhammad. Their marriage unites our two houses, and their union is a source of great happiness to us. O Lords of Quraysh, I want you to be witnesses that I give Khadija in marriage to Muhammad ibn Abdullah against a meher of four hundred pieces of gold. May Allah make their marriage a .happy one

M. Shibli, the Indian historian, says in his Seera that the meher of Hadret Khadija was) .(five hundred pieces of gold

Amr bin Asad, the aged uncle of Khadija, also spoke on the occasion, and he affirmed, in his own words, what Waraqa b. Naufal, had said. And it was he who, as guardian of .the bride, gave her away to Muhammad ibn Abdullah

.Abu Talib paid the meher for his nephew

Edward Gibbon

At home and abroad, in peace and war, Abu Talib, the most respected of Mohammed's uncles, was the guide and guardian of his youth; in his ۲۵th year he entered into the service of Khadija, rich and noble widow (sic) of Mecca, who soon rewarded his fidelity with the gift of her hand and fortune. The marriage contract, in the simple style of antiquity, recites the mutual love of Mohammed and Khadija; describes him as the most

accomplished of the tribe of Koreish; and stipulates a dowry of twelve ounces of gold .and twenty camels, which was supplied by the liberality of his uncle

(The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire)

Washington Irving

Khadija was filled with a lively faith in the superhuman merits of her youthful steward, Mohammed. At her nuptials, Haleema, who had nursed Mohammed in his infancy, .was summoned and was presented with a flock of forty sheep

(The Life of Mohammed)

All the guests congratulated Muhammad Mustafa on his wedding and expressed their best wishes for his happiness. They also congratulated his uncle, Abu Talib, on the .auspicious occasion. Both thanked their guests cordially

When these ceremonies were over, the major-domo ordered the slaves to spread out the banquet. The banquet was a gustatorial extravaganza such as no one had ever seen in Makka. The guests feasted upon delicacies each of which was a masterpiece of the culinary art. They slaked their thirst with delectable drinks laced with lotus .nectar

After the feast, each guest was invested with a robe of honor, in conformity with the .ancient custom of the Arabian aristocracy

Presently, the major-domo announced that the bride was ready to depart. A richly-caparisoned she-camel, carrying a white pavilion on her back, was waiting at the gate of the house. All the guests gathered in the foyer to see the bride being escorted to . the gate. Her maids assisted her in climbing into the bridal pavilion

Embark ye on the ark, in the name of Allah, whether it move"...

or be at rest! For my Lord is, be sure, oft-forgiving, most merciful." (Chapter ١١; Verse ۴١)

One of the maidservants sat in the pavilion with the bride. Resting upon her head was a floral tiara, and her hair was threaded with blue ribbons and strands of lustrous pearls. She was wearing bracelets of agate, coral and rock crystal, and she held a jewelled fan in her hand.

A team of Nubian slaves carrying flambeaus, marched in front and on the right and the left sides of the she-camel.

The bridegroom also mounted his horse, and he, his uncles, the young men of Bani Hashim and their guests, returned to the house of Abu Talib in the same panoply as they had gone earlier that day to the house of the bride.

When this torch-lit procession arrived at the house of Abu Talib, his wife and sisters assisted the bride in dismounting from the she-camel. A chamberlain held a parasol of white silk over her head, and conducted her into the inner apartments of the house.

And say: "O my Lord! Enable me to disembark with thy blessing: For Thou art the best to enable (us) to disembark." (Chapter ٢٣, Verse ٢٩)

Everything went off with perfect precision. Coordination was superb from beginning to end.

The marriage of Muhammad and Khadija had brought happiness to everyone but the happiness of Abu Talib knew no bounds. He had been very anxious that his nephew should have a good wife. This anxiety turned into pure and undiluted joy

when his nephew and Khadija were married. There could not have been a better match. Abu Talib thanked Allah for the new happiness he had found, and his happiness was shared by his brothers, Abbas and Hamza, and all other members of .the clan of Hashim

Three days after the marriage, Abu Talib made arrangements for a banquet to mark the occasion called since then "the feast of walima." He dazzled the whole city by his liberality. At the feast, every resident of Makka was his guest. Muhammad, the bridegroom, was himself welcoming the guests into the house. He himself, his uncles, his cousins and all the young men of Bani Hashim, were the proud hosts. The banquet lasted for three days. Years later, Islam made the feast of walima a "memorial" to the banquet of Abu Talib at the marriage of Muhammad and Khadija, instituting it as a tradition of all Muslim marriages. Abu Talib was the first man to arrange it. Before the marriage of Muhammad and Khadija, the feast of walima was not known to anyone in .Arabia

Abu Talib must have wished that his beloved brother, Abdullah and his wife, Amina, may Allah bless them, were also present to witness and to bless the marriage of their son, and to share his (Abu Talib's) happiness. But even if Abdullah and Amina had been present, the marriage of their son could not have been celebrated with more pomp (and pageantry than it was with Abu Talib as his (Muhammad's

.guardian

Next it was Khadija's turn to show generosity and hospitality. Generosity and hospitality were her old "addictions." And what occasion could be more appropriate or propitious for her than her own marriage to satisfy this propensity? She, therefore, ordered her major-domo to make arrangements for the most elaborate banquet in .the history of Makka

It was a banquet that was truly memorable. Even the beggars of Makka and the wandering tribesmen and women were not excluded from the list of guests. They feasted on delicacies which they had never seen before. Those Arabs of the desert who had never tasted anything but brackish or rank water all their lives, drank rose water as the guests of Khadija. For many days the guests - rich and poor, high and low, lord and lackey, young and old - were fed in her house. To the poor guests, Khadija gave pieces of gold and silver and clothes, and she filled the houses of many .widows and orphans with the necessities of life which they didn't have before

Khadija had spent many years of her life waiting for the ideal man to come. Her long wait was at last rewarded when Muhammad came along, and they were united in holy .wedlock

The marriage of Muhammad and Khadija was the first and the last of its kind in the world. It was the only marriage in the whole world which abounded in heavenly blessings as well as material blessings. It was a marriage which was immeasurably and incalculably

.rich in the blessings of both the heaven and the earth

It is entirely probable that in Arabia, no woman ever brought so much dowry with her into the house of her husband as Khadija did. It included slaves, slave girls, real estate, pasture lands, herds of camels and horses, flocks of goats and sheep, and her personal outfit of rich and rare fabrics, accessories, priceless heirlooms, ornaments, .precious metals, precious stones and masses of gold and silver coins

This dowry, unprecedented as it was for its quality and its quantity, was not a gift to Khadija – the bride – from her uncles or from her brothers. It was the product of her own efforts. She had produced it by her own diligence, industry, prudence, and .foresight

But these were not the only riches that Khadija brought with her. She also brought the riches of heart and mind, and these were immeasurable and inexhaustible. In the .years to come she immeasurably enriched the life of her husband with these gifts

Once Khadija was married, she appears to have lost interest in her mercantile ventures and in her commercial empire. Marriage changed the character of her dedication and commitment. She had found Muhammad Mustafa, the greatest of all treasures in the world. Once she found him, gold, silver and diamonds lost their value for her. Muhammad Mustafa, the future Messenger of Allah and the future Prophet of Islam, became the one object of all her affection, attention and devotion. Of course, she never lost

her genius for organization, but now instead of applying it to her business, she applied it to the service of her husband. She reorganized her whole life around the personality .of Muhammad Mustafa

Khadija could not wind up her wide-ranging commercial operations abruptly. She had) to phase them out. By degrees, therefore, she phased out the export-and-import (.business which her father had founded

In the years following his marriage, Muhammad travelled again with Khadija's caravans to Syria. M. Shibli, the Indian historian, says that he also went to Yemen. Wherever he went, he made profits. Khadija also recruited other managers who sold her merchandize or bought merchandise for her, and they too made profits for her. But the emphasis had shifted; instead of expanding her business as she had done in the years before her marriage, Khadija began, gradually, to curtail her commitments .until all her merchandize was sold, and she had recovered all her investments

When the Princess of Makka entered the house of her husband, Muhammad Mustafa, the most successful and the happiest phase of life began for her. This phase lasted ۲۵ years - until her death. She immediately adapted her life to the new environment. From the very first day, she took charge of her new duty which was to make the life of her husband happy and pleasant. In carrying out this duty, she was eminently .successful, as the history of later times has eloquently borne witness

Marriage opened a new chapter for both Muhammad and Khadija in their

life. The keynote of this "chapter" was happiness – the purest kind of happiness. Blessed with happiness as their marriage was, it was also blessed with children. Their first-born was a boy called Qasim. It was after the birth of the infant Qasim that his father, Muhammad Mustafa, was called Abul-Qasim – the father of Qasim – as per the .custom of the Arabs

The second child was also a boy. His name was Abdullah. He bore the nicknames of .Tahir and Tayyeb. Both Qasim and Abdullah died in their infancy

The third and the last and the only surviving child of Muhammad Mustafa and Khadija was their daughter, Fatima Zahra. Though the gifts which Allah had bestowed upon them, were many, there was none that they treasured more than their daughter. She was the "light of the eyes" of her father, and she was the "comfort of his heart." She was also the future "Lady of Heaven." The father and mother showered their love upon her, and she brought hope and happiness and the blessings and the mercy of .Allah with her into their home

Chapter ۵: The Eve Of the Proclamation of Islam

Notwithstanding the fact that Arabia was a pit of iniquity and the bastion of idolatry and polytheism, Muhammad himself was free from all vice and sin, and he never bowed before any idol. Even before he formally declared that he came to establish the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth, his own conduct and character were a reflection of Quran Majid – the Book of Allah

and the Manifesto of Islam. Even his enemies have not been able to point out any divergence between his conduct and the precepts of Quran – at any time – after or before the Proclamation of his mission as the Messenger of Allah. After the Proclamation of his mission as Allah's messenger, he placed pagan practices and customs under proscription. But there is no evidence that before doing so, he himself .ever committed a pagan act, or indeed any act repugnant to Quran

It appears that Quran Majid was etched on the heart of Muhammad from beginning to end, and it also appears that he "preached" Islam even before the Proclamation but only through his deeds and not with his words. His deeds were just as eloquent as his speeches, and they proclaimed to the world what manner of man he was. After all, it were the pagans who called him Sadig (=Truthful) and Amin (=Trustworthy), and they were the same people who, in later years, persecuted him, hunted him, banished .him, and set a price on his head

!Muhammad's demeanor preached a silent sermon

Depraved and wanton as the pagan Arabs were, even they admired truthfulness, and they admired it even in an enemy. They admired Muhammad for his truthfulness yet their admiration did not inhibit them from conspiring to kill him when he denouncedtheir idolatry and polytheism. They loved nothing more than to kill him ever since he invited them to Islam but they never questioned his integrity and trustworthiness. On

.this point there cannot be a testimony more unimpeachable than theirs

The citizens of Makka admired not only Muhammad's integrity but also his judgment. At one time, the Quraysh were rebuilding the Kaaba, and in one of the walls they had to fit the Black Stone. Someone had to bring the Black Stone to the site of construction, lift it from the ground, and put it in its place in the wall. Who was going to ?do it

Each clan claimed the honor for itself but other clans were not willing to defer to anyone in this matter. The disagreement led to violent speeches, and it was not long before the swords were drawn. The sword was going to decide who would place the .Black Stone in the wall

At that moment an old Arab intervened, and suggested that instead of fighting against, and killing each other, the chiefs of the clans ought to wait and see who would be the first man to enter the precincts of the Kaaba on the following morning, .and then submit the case for adjudication to him

It was a wise suggestion, and the chiefs wisely accepted it. Next morning when the gate of Kaaba was opened, they noticed that it was the man they called Sadiq and Amin who was entering through it. They were all glad that it was he, and they all .agreed to refer their dispute to him, and to abide by his decision

Muhammad ordered a sheet of cloth to be brought and to

be spread on the ground. He then placed the Stone on it, and asked each chief to lift one of its corners, and to carry it to the foot of the wall of Kaaba. When it was done, .he himself lifted the Stone and placed it in position

Muhammad's decision satisfied everyone. By his wisdom, he had saved faces and he had obviated bloodshed. The incident also proved that in moments of crisis, the Arabs deferred to his opinion. They knew that he had all the virtues held high in their scale of .values

.Muhammad was an inspired leader of men

Sir William Muir

The circumstances which gave occasion for the decision of Mohammed (when Kaaba was being rebuilt and he put the Black Stone in place) strikingly illustrate the absence .of any paramount authority in Mecca

(The Life of Mohammed, London, ۱۸۷۷)

Muhammad at this time was ۳۵ years old. His temples were faintly silvered. He was a man much devoted to his family, and had a great fondness for children. His sons, Qasim and Abdullah, had died in their infancy. After their death, he and Khadija adopted Ali as their son. Ali was the youngest son of Muhammad's uncle and guardian, Abu Talib. He was five years old when he came into their house, and filled a void in their life. They brought him up and educated him. He grew up surrounded with their .love

In the years to come, Ali showed himself a most splendid product of the upbringing and education that Muhammad and

Khadija gave him. He was destined to be the most versatile young man in the entire .entourage of Muhammad, the Messenger of God

Sir William Muir

Shortly after the rebuilding of the Kaaba, Mohammed comforted himself for the loss of his infant son Casim by adopting Ali, the child of his friend and former guardian, Abu .Talib

Ali, at this time not above five or six years of age, remained ever after with Mohammed, and they exhibited towards each other the mutual attachment of parent .and child

(The Life of Mohammed, London. ١٨٧٧)

As noted before, Muhammad was endowed with a contemplative cast of mind. As the years passed, he became more and more absorbed in contemplation. He had discovered a cave called Hira, three miles in the hills to the north-east of Makka. To be free from extraneous distractions, and from any possible interference in his .reflections, he left the city, went to the hills, and spent the long summer days in Hira

Sometimes Muhammad Mustafa went to Hira alone, but quite often he took Khadija and the little boy, Ali, with him. The three of them spent the day together on top of the .hill, and returned home in the evening

From the cliffs of Hira, Muhammad could survey the immensity of heaven and the earth, and in silent wonder he contemplated the line where they met. How could one comprehend the greatness of the Creator Who created such vastness and Who regulates it all? What was so wonderful as the stars glittering in a

tranquil sky or as intriguing as the Destiny of Man? And could anyone fathom the mystery of the two great abstractions which cradled the universe - Space (=Makan) and Time (=Zaman)? Muhammad sought answers to questions that embody perennial mysteries of human existence. For him, all creation was veiled in mystery. He spent .hours reflecting on the awesome Intelligence and the constancy of Creation

But as mysterious as the universe was, it was obvious to Muhammad that it was governed by immutable laws. He could almost "see" an organization and a system at work; without such organization and system there would only be chaos in both the .celestial and the terrestrial spheres of creation

A few years later when Muhammad told the Arabs that God had sent him among) them as His messenger, they challenged him to show them a "miracle." " A miracle?" asked Muhammad. To see a miracle, all that they had to do was to open their eyes and to look around. Wasn't the whole universe full of miracles? What miracles were more wonderful than the rising and setting of the sun, the full moon sailing across the sky, the stars in their revolutions, the incandescent heaven, the change of the (?seasons, the upheaving bosom of the ocean, and the love of a mother for her child

If the immensity and majesty of Creation filled Muhammad's mind with wonder, they also filled his heart with humility. It might have occurred to him that if intellect could not apprehend the Creator

and His mighty works, perhaps love could. He, therefore, let intellect defer to love - the love of his Creator.

Muhammad also reflected on the state of the Arabs - their idolatry, their lust for blood and practice of infanticide, and the emptiness, meaninglessness, aimlessness and dreariness of their lives.

But for Muhammad, the long years of "spiritual apprenticeship" and his solitary explorations in the domain of the soul, were coming to an end. He might have sensed that the time to turn his back upon a life of contemplation and meditation had come, and that he had soon to plunge into a life of action and conflict.

Chapter ۶: The Proclamation of Islam

At length the groundwork that Muhammad had to do to take charge of his duties and responsibilities as the Last and the Greatest Messenger of God to this world, was over.

The night of paganism, error and ignorance had been long, dark, dreary and dismal. Mankind was in a state of despair. It was at a loss to know if it would ever see the light of dawn.

It was God's infinite Mercy which harkened to the unspoken longing of mankind. In response to its silent appeal, the Sun of Islam rose from the valley of Makka to overpower the darkness of polytheism in the world, and to proclaim the triumph of the doctrine of Tawhid (monotheism).

Muhammad was ۴۰ years old when he was commanded by Allah, through His angel, Gabriel, to declare His Oneness (Tawhid) to the idolaters and polytheists of the whole world,

.and to deliver the message of new hope and peace to an embattled humanity

In compliance with this command of Heaven, Muhammad launched the momentous programme called Islam which was to change the destiny of mankind forever. The basic design of Islam, as he received it from Gabriel, was perfected in Heaven, and .now he had to present it to the family of man

Before he received his prophetic mission, Muhammad spent days and nights in prayer and meditation both at home and in the cave of Hira, as noted before. He was in Hira one evening when the Archangel Gabriel appeared before him, and brought to him the tidings that Allah had chosen him to be His last messenger to this world, and had imposed upon him the duty of extricating mankind from the welter of sin, error and ignorance, and to bring it into the light of Guidance, Truth and Knowledge. Gabriel :then bade Muhammad to "read" the following verses

In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful) Read in the name of thy Lord and) Cherisher Who created: created man out of a clot of congealed blood. Read! And thy Lord is most bountiful, He who taught the use of pen: taught man that which he knew .not

These five verses were the earliest revelation, and they came to Muhammad Mustafa on the "Night of Power" or the "Blessed Night" in Ramadan (the ninth month of the .Islamic calendar) of the ۴۰th year of the Elephant

(Ramadhan is the (month .۱

in which was sent down the Quran, as a guide to mankind, also clear (signs) for (guidance and judgment (between right and wrong). (Chapter ۲; verse ۱۸۵

(We have indeed revealed this (message) in the night of power. (Chapter ۹۷; verse ۱ .۲

By the book that makes things clear; We sent it down during a blessed night... .۳ ((Chapter ۴۴; verses ۲ and ۳

The Night of Power or the Blessed Night occurs, according to tradition, during the last ten nights of Ramadan, and could be the ۲۱st or ۲۳rd or ۲۵th or ۲۷th of the month. According to the Gregorian calendar, the first revelation came to the Prophet on the .۱۲th of February, ۶۱۰, as per the calculations of Mahmud Pasha al-Falaki of Egypt

These five verses are at the beginning of the ۹۶th chapter of Quran Majid. The name .(of the chapter is Iqraa (Read) or 'AIaA (the Clot of Congealed Blood

In their respective accounts of the reception by Muhammad Mustafa of the First Revelation, the Sunni and the Shia Muslims are not in agreement. According to the Sunni tradition, the appearance of Gabriel suprised Muhammad; and when the former ordered him to read, he said: "I cannot read." This happened thrice, and each time when Muhammad declared his inability to read, the angel pressed him hard to his bosom. Eventually, he was able to repeat the five verses whereupon the angel .released him, and disappeared

When Archangel Gabriel disappeared, Muhammad, who was now "ordained" the Messenger of Allah, descended from the

cliffs of Hira, and repaired to his home in a state of great trepidation. Apparently, Gabriel's sudden intrusion had been a traumatic experience for him. He was shivering with cold, and when he entered his house, he asked his wife, Kltadija, to cover him with a blanket which she did. When he had sufficiently recovered from the shock, he recounted to her the story of his strange encounter with Archangel Gabriel in the cave .of Hira

The traditional Sunni account of this event is given in an article written by Shaykh Ahmad Zaki Hammad, Ph.D., captioned "Be Hopeful," published in the magazine, Islamic Horizons of the Islamic Society of North America, Plainfield, Indiana, May-:June ۱۹۸۷, as follows

The Prophet (pbuh) in the early stages in Makkah, feared that the revelation experience was an evil touch preying upon him, playing with him mentally, upsetting his tranquility and peace of mind. He was afraid that one of the jinn had touched him. He expressed this to Khadija. His fear increased to the point that --- and please don't be surprised by an authentic report in Bukhari --- the Prophet (pbuh) preferred to take his own life rather than to be touched by evil, to be tampered with, corrupted, or ".polluted

But according to the accounts of the Shia Muslims, Muhammad Mustafa, far from being suprised, much less frightened, by the sudden appearance of Archangel Gabriel, welcomed him as if he had been expecting him. Gabriel brought the tidings that Allah had chosen him to be

His Last Messenger to Mankind, and congratulated him on being selected to become .the recipient of the greatest of all honors for a mortal in this world

Muhammad had no hesitation in accepting the mission of prophethood nor he had any difficulty in repeating the verses of the First Revelation. He read them or repeated them effortlessly, spontaneously. Gabriel, in fact, was no stranger to him, and he also knew that as the slave of Allah, his own raison d'etre was to carry out the mission imposed upon him by Allah. He was "mission-oriented" even before Gabriel's visit. .Gabriel only gave him the signal to begin

The Shia Muslims also say that one thing that Gabriel didn't have to do, was to apply physical pressure on Muhammad to read. If he did, it would truly be a bizarre mode of imparting to Muhammad, the ability to read - by squeezing him or choking him. They further maintain that Muhammad Mustafa did not contemplate suicide at any time in his life, even in its most desolate moments; and that it never occurred to him that he could ever be touched by "evil" or that he could be "tampered with, corrupted or ".polluted

In this context, the Shia Muslims quote the following two verses of Quran Majid which :appear to have a logical connection with this episode

Allah said to Iblis:) "As for My servants, no authority shalt thou have over them.") .۱ .enough is thy Lord for a disposer of affairs

(Chapter ۱۷; verse ۶۵)

Allah Himself

protects His sincere and true slaves from the clutches of Iblis (the Devil); he can have no authority over them, and they can never be tampered with or corrupted or .polluted

But God will deliver the righteous to their place of salvation; no evil shall touch them. .۲ .Nor shall they grieve

(Chapter ۳۹; verse ۶۱)

No evil could touch Muhammad, the chosen one of God Himself. Under God's protection, he was safe from every evil. He lived under the jurisdiction of God at all .times

Nevertheless, Muhammad felt alarm at the magnitude of the task ahead of him. He realized that in the execution of his duty, he would be confronted by the massive, formidable, and determined opposition of the pagans of the whole world. The state of his anxiety was almost palpable. He was therefore in a somber frame of mind as he left the cave to return home. And he did in fact ask Khadija to drape him in a blanket .as he sat down to recapitulate the events in Hira to her

When Khadija heard the story that Muhammad Mustafa told her, she comforted him and reassured him by saying: "O son of my uncle, be of good cheer. Allah has chosen you to be His messenger. You are always kind to your neighbors, helpful to your kinsfolk, generous to the orphans, the widows and the poor, and friendly to the ".strangers. Allah will never forsake you

R V. C. Bodley

God is my protection, Oh Abul Kasim!" said Khadija, "Rejoice and be"

of good cheer. He in Whose hands stands the life of Khadija, is my Witness that thou wilt be the Messenger of His people!" Then she added, "Hast thou not been loving to thy kinsfolk, kind to thy neighbors, charitable to the poor, hospitable to the stranger, "?faithful to thy word, and ever a defender of the truth

(The Messenger, the Life of Mohammed, ۱۹۴۶)

It is possible that Muhammad was momentarily overwhelmed by the thought of his accountability to Allah in carrying the enormous burden of his new responsibilities, but when he heard Khadija's soothing words, he immediately felt the tensions within him decompressing. She reassured him and convinced him that with God's Hand on his .shoulder, he would rise equal to his duties and would overcome all obstacles

Muhammad rallied. He knew from that moment that Khadija was the "instrument" through which God would reinforce his courage if it ever flagged, and would boslter .his morale if it ever sagged

:The following verse of Quran Majid also appears to support the Shia point of view

And remember We took from the Prophets their covenant: as (We did) from tree: from Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus the son of Mary: We took from them a solemn covenant: that (Allah) may question the (custodians) of truth concerning the truth they ((were charged with): (Chapter ۳۳; verses ۷,۸

Translator's Note

There is an implied covenant on all created things to follow God's Law, which is the law of their being. But there is a special implied covenant

with all Prophets, strict and solemn, that they shall carry out their mission, proclaim God's Truth without fear or favor, and be ever ready in His service in all circumstances. That gives them their position and dignity and their tremendous responsibility in respect of the people whom they come to instruct and lead to the .(Right Way. (A. Yusuf Ali

The Shia Muslims point out that Allah had taken a Covenant from Muhammad to deliver His Last Message to Mankind. Therefore, they do not agree with those historians who allege that Muhammad reacted to Gabriel's visit with surprise, shock and fear. Such reactions, they say, simply do not jibe with his temperament, and are .not consistent with the character of his solemn Covenant

After a brief interval, Gabriel appeared once again before Muhammad when the latter was in the cave of Hira, and presented to him the second Revelation which reads as :follows

O thou wrapped up (in a mantle)! Arise and deliver thy warning! And thy Lord do thou (magnify! (Chapter ۷۴; verses ۱, ۲, ۳

The commandment from Heaven to "arise and warn" was the signal to Muhammad (the wrapped up in a blanket) to begin his work. Gabriel expounded to him his new duties the foremost of which was to destroy the worship of false gods, and to plant the banner of Tawhid - the doctrine of the Unity of the Creator - in the world; and he had to invite mankind to the True Faith -Islam. Islam means to

.surrender to Allah and to acknowledge Muhammad as His slave and His messenger

A.l.r. a book which We have revealed unto you, in order that you might lead mankind out of the depths of darkness into light - by the leave of their Lord - to the way of ((Him) the exalted in power, worthy of all praise. (Chapter ۱۴, verse ۱

.Muhammad had to lead mankind out of the depths of darkness into light

How was Muhammad to lead mankind out of the depths of Darkness into Light? This :question is answered by Quran Majid in the following verse

A similar (favor have you already received) in that We have sent among you an apostle of your own, rehearsing to you Our signs, and sanctifying you, and instructing (you in scripture and wisdom, and in new knowledge. (Chapter ۲; verse ۱۵۱

Quran is precise and specific in defining the concept of his duty for Muhammad :Mustafa. He had to lead mankind out of "the depths of darkness" into the light, by

rehearsing the Signs of Allah; ۲. sanctifying mankind; ۳. instructing mankind in . ۱ .scripture and wisdom; and ۴. imparting new knowledge to it

Gabriel and Muhammad then went out of the cave. Gabriel taught him how to take ablutions (ritual purification before saying prayers). Muhammad took ablutions, and .then, with Gabriel in the lead, both of them offered prayers

When the prayer was over, Gabriel bade farewell to Muhammad, and disappeared in .the sky

That evening Muhammad returned home conscious and conscientious of his new

duty to "arise and warn." He had to preach Islam, the Religion of Allah, to the whole .world, and he had to begin from his own home - by preaching it to his wife

Muhammad told Khadija about the second visit of Gabriel, and the duty imposed upon .him by Allah to invite her to Islam

For Khadija, the antecedents and the moral integrity of her husband were an incontrovertible attestation that he was a divine messenger, and she readily accepted Islam. In fact, between her and Islam, an "ideological affinity" had pre-existed. Therefore, when Muhammad Mustafa presented Islam to her, she at once "recognized" it, and rosily embraced it. She believed that the Creator was One and :that Muhammad was His messenger, and she declared

I bear witness that there is no God but Allah; and I bear witness that Muhammad is .His slave and his messenger

Muhammad, the new messenger of Allah, had won his first convert - Khadija - his wife. She was the first one, the very first to affirm her faith in Tawhid (Oneness of the Creator), and she was the very first to acknowledge Muhammad as God's messenger .to all mankind. She was the first Muslima

Muhammad had "introduced" Islam to Khadija. He explained to her its meaning, and he initiated her into it. He told her that obedience to and love for Allah were central to .the whole system called Islam

Then Muhammad showed Khadija how to take ablutions and how to say prayers. She took ablutions and both

of them offered their prayers, with Muhammad as the leader. After the prayer, both of them thanked Allah for bestowing upon them the blessing of Islam. They also thanked Him for the blessing of prayers (Salat) through which He gave them .audience

Prayer was, Khadija soon found out, the "Gate" to Allah's Tribunal of Grace and Mercy. The humble slaves of Allah have to pass through this "Gate" to get access to His Tribunal and to receive Grace and Mercy from Him. She also found out that prayer .(Salat) was perpetual renewal and sanctification

Khadija is the first Muslims - the very first to submit to Allah - next to her husband. Now no matter who compiles the list of the earliest converts to Islam, her name will always be on top. No venal historian can change this fact. The honor of being the first .Muslims belongs to Khadija, and it will be hers to all Eternity

:After her induction into Islam, Khadija adopted the following credo

Say: "verily, my Lord hath guided me to a way that is straight, - a religion of right, -the ".path (trod) by Abraham the true in faith, and He (certainly) joined not gods with Allah

Say: "truly, my prayer and my service of sacrifice, my life and my death, are (all) for :Allah, the cherisher of the worlds

No partner hath He: this I am commanded, and I am the first of those who bow to His .will

(Quran Majid. Chapter ۶, verses ۱۶۱, ۱۶۲, ۱۶۳)

Washington Irving

After the first encounter

with Gabriel, Mohammed came trembling and agitated to Khadija. She saw everything with the eye of faith. "Joyful tidings dost thou bring," exclaimed she, by Him, in Whose hand is the soul of Khadija, I will henceforth regard thee as the Prophet of our nation. Rejoice," added she, "Allah will not suffer thee to fall to shame. Hast thou not been loving to thy kinsfolk, kind to thy neighbours, charitable to the poor, hospitable to the "?stranger, faithful to thy word, and ever a defender of the truth

(Life of Mohammed)

A Yusuf Ali

At twenty-five he (Muhammad) was united in the holy bonds Of wedlock with Kltadija the Great, the noble lady Who befriended him when he had no worldly resources, Trusted him when his worth was little known, Encouraged and understood him in his spiritual struggles, Believed in him when with trembling steps He took up the Call and ,withstood obloquy, Persecution, insults, threats, and tortures

And was a lifelong helpmate till she was gathered To the saints in his fifty-first year, - .A perfect woman, the mother of those that believe

(Introduction to the Translation and Commentary of the Holy Quran)

When Muhammad was ordained messenger of Allah, his young cousin, Ali ibn Abi Talib, was ten years old. As young as he was, he showed remarkable grasp of the events taking place around him, and was richly endowed with the capacity for participating in his guardian's religious experience. He therefore eagerly declared what he believed - that God was One, and Muhammad was

His messenger. And he could not wait long enough to offer prayers with Muhammad and Khadija. He wished to go into the presence of Allah in the company of His Own .messenger

Muhammad Mustafa taught Ali how to take ablutions and how to pray. Since then, Muhammad was never seen at prayer except when Ali was with him. The boy also memorized the verses of Quran Majid as and when they were revealed to Muhammad. In this manner, he literally grew up with Quran. In fact, Ali and Quran "grew up" together as "twins" in the house of Muhammad Mustafa and Khadija-tul-.Kubra

.Ali lived in an ambience vibrant with the ethos of Islam

Through such osmotic action, Islam became a part of the blood-stream of Ali ibn Abi .Talib, Muhammad's young protege. Islam became the very texture of his being

Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, had found the first Muslima in Khadija, and he .found the first Muslim in Ali ibn Abi Talib

Muhammad ibn Ishaq

Ali was the first male to believe in the Apostle of God, to pray with him and to believe in his divine message, when he was a boy of ten. God favored him in that he was .brought up in the care of the Apostle before Islam began

(The Life of the Messenger of Allah)

Muhammad Husayn Haykal

Ali was then the first youth to enter Islam. He was followed by Zayd ibn Harithah, Muhammad's client. Islam remained confined to the four walls of one house. Besides Muhammad himself, the converts of the

(new faith were his wife, his cousin, and his client. (The Life of Muhammad, Cairo, ۱۹۳۵

Marmaduke Pickthall

The first of all his (Muhammad's) converts was his wife, Khadija; the second his first .cousin Ali, whom he had adopted; the third his servant Zeyd, a former slave

(Introduction to the Translation of Holy Quran, ۱۹۷۵)

Abdullah Yusuf Ali

,To his (Muhammad's) cousin Ali, the well-beloved

,Born when he was thirty, he appeared As the very pattern of a perfect man

,As gentle as he was wise and true and strong

,The one in whose defence and aid He spent his utmost strength and skill

,Holding life cheap in support of a cause so high

And placing without reserve his chivalry, His prowess, his wit and learning, and his sword

,At the service of this mighty Messenger of God. Khadija believed

,exalted in faith Above all women; Ali, the well-beloved

,Then a child of ten, but lion-hearted, Plighted his faith

.and became from that moment The Right Hand of Islam

(Introduction to the Translation and Commentary of the Holy Qur'an)

The third "witness" who accepted Islam, was Zayd bin Haritha, the freed man of .Muhammad, and a member of his household

Tor Andre

.Zaid was one of the first to accept Islam, in fact the third after Khadija and Ali

(Mohammed, the Man and his Faith, ۱۹۶۰)

Ali ibn Abi Talib was the first male to accept Islam, and his precedence in accepting Islam, is beyond any question. Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal, the poet-philosopher of Indo-Pakistan, calls him, not the first, but "the foremost Muslim".

Ali's was the foremost Muslim in

point of time. No man preceded him in accepting Islam. But he was also the foremost Muslim in service to Islam and to its Messenger-Prophet as the years to come were to .reveal

Muhammad ibn Ishaq, the biographer of Muhammad Mustafa, reports the following in :his Seera

From Yahya b. al-Ash'ath b. Qays al-ICindi from his father, from his grandfather Afiif: Al-Abbas b. Abdul Muttalib was a friend of mine who used to go often to the Yaman to buy aromatics and sell them during the fairs. While I was with him in Mina, there came a man in the prime of life and performed the full rites of ablution and then stood up .and prayed. Then a woman came out and did her ablution and stood up and prayed

Then a boy came out just approaching manhood, took his ablutions, stood up and prayed by his side. I asked Abbas what were they doing, and he said that it was his nephew, Muhammad b. Abdullah b. Abdul Muttalib, who claims that Allah has sent him as an Apostle; the other is my brother's son, Ali ibn Abi Talib, who has followed him in his religion; the third is his wife, Khadija daughter of IChuwayled who also follows him ...in his religion

Afiif said after he had become a Muslim and Islam was firmly established in his heart, "."Would that I had been a fourth

.The fourth "witness" who accepted Islam, was Abu Bakr, a merchant of Makka

In the beginning, Muhammad preached Islam secretly. He

invited only those people to Islam he could trust, and who were like his personal .friends. The handful of neophytes he won, kept a "low profile" in Makka

Muhammad Husayn Haykal

Fearful of arousing the enmity and antagonism of Quraysh for their departure from .idol worship, the new Muslims used to hide the fact of their conversion

(The Life of Muhammad, Cairo, ۱۹۳۵)

Among the earliest converts to Islam were Yasar; his wife, Sumayya; and their son, Ammar. They are remarkable for the fact that they were the first family all members of which accepted Islam simultaneously, thus making up the first Muslim family, .outside the family of the Prophet of Islam himself

Another early convert to Islam was Abu Dharr el-Ghiffari of the tribe of Ghiffar, noted .in later years, for his uncompromising love of Justice and Truth

Through the efforts of Abu Bakr, the fourth Muslim, a few other Makkans also accepted Islam. Among them were Uthman bin Affan, a future khalifa of the Muslims; Talha; Zubayr; Abdur Rahman ibn Auf; Saad ibn Abi Waqqas; and Obaidullah Aamir .ibn al-Jarrah

Abu Abdulah Arqam bin Abil Arqam was a young man of twenty. He belonged to the Makhzoom clan of Quraysh, and was a successful businessman. He lived in a spacious house in the valley of Safa. He too heard the Call of Islam and responded to it, and he .put his house - Dar-al-Arqam - at the service of the Prophet of Islam

The Muslims at this time were so few in number that they did

not dare to say their prayers in Kaaba or in public. The Prophet gratefully accepted Arqam's offer, and Muslims gathered in his house to offer their congregational prayers. Dar-al-Arqam thus became Dar-al-Islam - the missionary center of Islam, .and the first meeting place of the Muslims

Three years passed in this manner but in the fourth year of the Call, Muhammad was .commanded by Allah to invite his own folks to Islam openly

(And admonish thy nearest kinsmen (Chapter ۲۶, verse ۲۱۴

Muhammad's kinsmen included all members of Bani Hashim and Bani al-Muttalib. He ordered his young cousin, Ali, to invite their chief men to a banquet. Forty of them .came

The guests gathered in a hall in the house of Abu Talib, and when they had partaken of the repast, Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, rose to address them. Among the guests, there was one Abu Lahab, an uncle of Muhammad on his father's side. He had probably heard what his nephew was doing secretly, and guessed the reason why he had invited the Bani Hashim to a feast. Muhammad had just begun to speak when Abu :Lahab rudely interrupted him, and himself addressed the assembly, saying

Brothers, cousins and uncles: Do not listen to this "renegade," and do not leave your ancestral religion, if he invites you to a new one. If you do, then remember that you will rouse the anger of all Arabs against you. You do not have the strength to fight against all of them. After all, you

are a mere handful. Therefore, it will be in your interest to be steadfast in your .traditional religion

Abu Lahab, by his brief speech, succeeded in throwing the assembly into confusion. Everyone stood up milling around and jostling against each other. They then began to .leave, and soon the hall was empty

Muhammad's first attempt to convert his own clan to Islam had failed. But unfazed by .this initial setback, he ordered his cousin, Ali, to invite the same guests a second time

A few days later the guests came, and when they had eaten supper, Muhammad :addressed them as follows

I offer thanks to Allah for His mercies. I praise Allah and I seek His guidance. I believe" in Him, and I put my trust in Him. He is Beneficent and Benevolent; and He is Gracious ".and Merciful

:After this doxology, the Prophet went on to say

I bear witness that there is no god except Allah; He has no partners, and I am His" messenger. Allah has commanded me to invite you to His religion -Islam - by saying: ".“And warn thy nearest kinsmen

I, therefore, warn you that you should abandon false worship, and call upon you to testify that there is no god but Allah, and that I am His messenger. O ye sons of Abdul Muttalib, no one ever came to you with anything better than what I have brought to you. By accepting it, your welfare will be assured in this world and in the Hereafter. Who among you will support

me in carrying out this momentous duty? Who will share the burden of work with me? Who will respond to my call? Who will become my vicegerent, my deputy and my "?wazir

There were forty guests in the hall. Muhammad paused to assess the impact of his words upon them. But no one among them responded. No one in the audience seemed to stir. At last, when the silence became too oppressive, young Ali stood up and said that he would support the Messenger of Allah; would share the burden of his .work; and would become his vicegerent, his deputy and his wazir

But Muhammad beckoned Ali to sit down, and said: "Wait! Perhaps someone older ".than you might respond to my call

Muhammad renewed his invitation but still there was no answer, and he was greeted only by an uneasy silence. Once again Ali offered his services but the Apostle still wishing that some senior member of the clan would accept his invitation, asked him to wait. He then appealed to the clan a third time to consider his invitation, and the same thing happened again. No one in the assembly showed any interest in what he told them. He surveyed the crowd and transfixed everyone in it with his gaze but no one moved. At length he beheld the solitary figure of Ali rising above the silent figures of .the adults, to volunteer his services to him a third time

This time Muhammad Mustafa, the Messenger of Allah, accepted Ali's offer. He

drew him close, pressed him to his heart, and said to the assembly: "This is my wazir; ".my successor; and my vicegerent. Listen to him and obey his commands

Edward Gibbon

Three years were silently employed in the conversion of fourteen proselytes, the first fruits of his (Mohammed's) mission; but in the fourth year he assumed the prophetic office, and resolving to impart to his family the light of divine truth, he prepared a banquet for the entertainment of forty guests of the race of Hashim. "Friends and kinsmen," Mohammed said to the assembly. "I offer you, and I alone can offer, the most precious gifts, the treasures of this world and of the world to come. God has commanded me to call you to His service. Who among you will support my burden? Who among you will be my companion and my vizir? No answer was returned, till the silence of astonishment and doubt, and contempt was at length broken by the impatient courage of Ali, a youth in the fourteenth year of his age. "O Prophet, I am the man, whoever rises against thee, I will dash out his teeth, tear out his eyes, break his legs, rip up his belly. O Prophet, I will be thy vizir over them." Mohammed accepted his offer with transport, and Abu Talib was ironically exhorted to respect the superior .dignity of his son

(The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire)

Washington Irving

O children of Abd al-Muttalib," cried he (Mohammed) with enthusiasm, "to you, of"

all men, has Allah vouchsafed these most precious gifts. In His name I offer you the blessings of this world, and endless joys hereafter. Who among you will share the "?burden of my offer? Who will be my brother, my lieutenant, my vizir

All remained silent; some wondering; others smiling with incredulity and derision. At length Ali, starting up with youthful zeal, offered himself to the services of the Prophet though modestly acknowledging his youth and physical weakness. Mohammed threw up his arms around the generous youth, and pressed him to his bosom. "Behold my brother, my vizir, my vicegerent," exclaimed he, "let all listen to his words, and obey ".him

(The Life of Mohammed)

Sir Richard Burton

After a long course of meditation, fired with anger by the absurd fanaticism of the Jews, the superstitions of the Syrian and Arab Christians, and the horrid idolatries of his unbelieving countrymen, an enthusiast too - and what great soul has not been an enthusiast? - he (Mohammed) determined to reform those abuses which rendered revelation contemptible to the learned and prejudicial to the vulgar. He introduced himself as one inspired to a body of his relations and fellow-clansmen. The step was a failure, except that it won for him a proselyte worth a thousand sabres in the person .of Ali, son of Abu Talib

(The Jew the Gypsy and El Islam, San Francisco, ۱۸۹۸)

Ali had offered his services to Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, and the latter had ,accepted them. To the elders of the tribe

Ali's conduct might have appeared rash and brazen but he soon proved that he had the grit to accomplish far more than others had the courage even to dream. The Messenger of Allah, on his part, accepted the offer not only with expressions of gratitude and joy but also declared that Ali was, from that moment, his vicegerent and his wazir. Muhammad's declaration was forthright and unequivocal. It is foolish to quibble, as some people do, that Ali's vicegerency of Muhammad, was confined to the tribe of Bani Hashim because it was an assembly of Bani Hashim. But Muhammad himself did not restrict Ali's vicegerency to Bani Hashim. Ali was his vicegerent for all .Muslims and for all time

The banquet at which Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, declared Ali to be his successor, is famous in history as "the Banquet of Dhul-'Asheera." This name comes from Quran Majid itself (Chapter ۲۶; verse ۲۱۴). Strangely, Sir William Muir has called this historic event "apocryphal." But what is apocryphal or so improbable about it? Could anything be more logical for the Messenger of Allah than to begin his work of propagating Islam at his own home, and with the members of his own family and clan, especially, after he was expressly commanded by Allah to warn his "nearest "?kinsmen

The feast of Dhul-'Asheera at which Muhammad, the Apostle of Allah, designated Ali ibn Abi Talib, as his successor, is a historical event, and its authenticity has been affirmed, among others, by the following

:Arab historians

Tabari, History, Volume II, p. ٢١٧ ٢. Kamil ibn Atheer, History, Vol. II, p. ٢٢ ٣. Abul Fida, .١ History, Vol. I, p. ١١۶

:Writing about Ali at this time, Sir William Muir says

His (Mohammed's) cousin, Ali, now ١٣ or ١۴ years of age, already gave tokens of the" wisdom and judgment which distinguished him in after life. Though possessed of indomitable courage, he lacked the stirring energy which would have rendered him an effective propagator of Islam. He grew up from a child in the faith of Mohammed, and ".his earliest associations strengthened the convictions of maturer years

(Life of Mohammed, London, ١٨٧٧)

We have many reservations about Sir William Muir's statement that Ali "lacked the stirring energy that would have made him an effective propagator of Islam." Ali did not lack energy or anything else. In all the crises of Islam, Muhammad Mustafa, the Messenger of Allah, selected him to carry out the most dangerous missions, and he .invariably accomplished them

As a missionary also, Ali was peerless. There was no one among all the companions of the Prophet who was a more effective propagator of Islam than he. He promulgated the first ۴٠ verses of the Sura Bera'a (=Immunity), the ٩th chapter of Quran Majid, to the pagans in Makka, as the first missionary of Islam, and as one representing the Messenger of Allah himself. And it was Ali who brought all the tribes of Yemen into the .fold of Islam

Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, had brought up Ali as

his own child, and if the latter had lacked anything, he would have known it. He declared Ali to be his wazir, his successor and his vicegerent at a time when no one could have foreseen the future of Islam. This only points up the unbounded confidence that the Prophet of Islam had in this stripling of ۱۴ years!

Ali symbolized the hopes and aspirations of Islam. In the great revolution which Muhammad, the Apostle of God, had launched at the feast of Dhul-'Asheera, he had mobilized the dynamism and the idealism; and the fervor and the vigor of youth; Ali personified them all.

Two things had happened at the Feast. One was that the Prophet had brought Islam out in the open; it was no longer an "under-ground" movement; it had "surfaced." At the Feast of his kinsfolk, Muhammad had "crossed the Rubicon" and now there could be no turning back. Time had come for him to carry the message of Islam beyond his own clan - first to the Quraysh of Makka, then to all the Arabs, and finally, to the rest of the world. The other was that he had found Ali who was the embodiment of courage, devotion and resolution, and was worth far more than a "thousand sabres."

It is reported that some days after the second banquet of Dhul-'Asheera, Muhammad Mustafa climbed up the hill of Safa near the Kaaba, and called out: "O sons of Fehr; O sons of Loi; O sons of Adi; and all

the rest of Quraysh! Come hither, and listen to me. I have something very important ".to tell you

Many of those Makkans who heard his voice, came to listen to him. Addressing them, he said: "Will you believe me if I told you that the army of an enemy was hidden behind yonder hills, and was watching you to attack you as soon as it found you sleeping or off-guard?" They said they would believe him because they had never .heard him telling a lie

If that's so," said Muhammad, "then listen to this with attention. The Lord of heavens" and earth has commanded me to warn you of the dreadful time that is coming. But if you pay heed, you can save yourselves from perdition..." He had gone only as far as this when Abu Lahab, who was present among the listeners, interrupted him a second time by saying: "Death to you. Did you waste our time to tell us only this? We do not ".want to listen to you. Do not call us again

Thenceforth, Abu Lahab made it a practice to shadow the Prophet wherever the latter went. If he started to read Quran or to say something else, he (Abu Lahab) interrupted him or started heckling him. Abu Lahab's hatred of Muhammad and hostility to Islam were shared by his wife, Umm Jameel. Both of them were cursed by .Allah, for their perversity, in Chapter ۱۱۱ of His Book

Chapter ۷: The Persecution of the Muslims

Though Abu Lahab frequently succeeded in dispersing the crowds

that gathered to hear the message of Islam, word nevertheless spread in Makka about it. People talked about the message of Islam. The thoughtful ones among them posed the question: "What is this religion to which Muhammad is inviting us?" This question showed curiosity on their part and a few of them wanted to know more .about Islam

In the days that followed, Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, made many attempts to preach to the Makkans. Abu Lahab and his confederate, Abu Jahl, did what they .could to sabotage his work but they could not deflect him from his aim

It was a strange message that Muhammad brought to the Arabs, and it was unique. No one had ever heard anything like it before. Muhammad as messenger of Allah, told the Arabs not to worship the inanimate objects which they themselves had fashioned, and which had no power either to give anything to them or to take anything away from them, and to whom they had given the status of gods and goddesses. Instead, he told them, they ought to give their love and obedience to Allah, the One Lord of the whole universe. He also told them that in His sight - in the sight of their Creator - they were all equal, and if they became Muslims, they would all become brothers of each .other

But idolatry was an old "fixation" for the Arabs, and they were not quite ready to dump their idols. They resented Muhammad's diatribes against idolatry, and

.they were not very finicky about showing him their resentment

Muhammad also called upon the rich Arabs to share their wealth with the poor and the under-privileged. The poor, he said, had a right to receive their share out of the wealth of the rich. Such sharing, he further said, would guarantee the equitable .distribution of wealth in the community

Most of the rich Arabs in Makka were money-lenders; or rather, they were "loan sharks." They had grown rich by lending money to the poor classes at exorbitant rates of interest. The poor could never repay their debts, and were thus held in economic servitude in perpetuity. The money-lenders throve on usury as vampires thrive on blood. Sharing their ill-gotten wealth with the same people they had been exploiting, was, for them, something like a "sacrilege." By suggesting to them that they share !their wealth with the poor, Muhammad had tampered with a hornets' nest

Muhammad also wished to reorganize Arab society. The new doctrine that he put forward for this purpose, made Faith instead of Blood, the "linchpin" of the community. But the Arabs were bred in the code of pagan custom and convention; they believed in the basic tribal and kinship structures. For them "Blood" was the only workable basis of social organization. In their perception, if Faith were allowed to .supplant Blood in this equation, it would wreck the whole structure of the Arab society

But Muhammad had little interest in "Arab society." His aim was to create and to consolidate

an "Islamic society," which is held together by Faith and not by Blood. He, therefore, .assiduously cultivated and promoted the redeeming, transcending power of Faith

Philip K. Hitti

Substituting the religious for the centuries-old blood bond as the basis for social .cohesion was, indeed, a daring and original accomplishment of the Prophet of Arabia

(Islam, A Way of Life)

For the Arabs, all these were new and unfamiliar ideas; in fact, they were revolutionary. By preaching such revolutionary ideas, Muhammad had made the old establishment furious. Most furious and most assertive in the old establishment was the Umayyad clan of the Quraysh. Its members were the leading usurers and capitalists of Makka, and they were the high priests of the pagan pantheon. In Muhammad and the message of Islam, they saw a threat to their social system which was based upon privilege, elitism and force. His ideas, therefore, were most .abhorrent to them, and they were resolved not to let him change the status quo

Philip K. Hitti

The Quraysh - particularly its Umayyad clan - custodians of the Kaabah and the..." Zamzam, controllers of the caravan trade, and oligarchic masters of the city, had special reasons for resistance (to Muhammad). The new preaching might jeopardize pilgrimage to the Kaabah, next to trade their main source of income. Moreover, the once-poor orphan was introducing such dangerous economic doctrines as the rightful claim of beggars and the destitute to a share in the wealth of the rich. Additionally he (Muhammad) advocated a dangerous doctrine, one that would

substitute faith for blood as the social bond of community life. If "the believers are naught but brothers" (Quran, ۴۹:۱۰) was acted upon, the entire family, clan, and tribal "...unity would be undermined and replaced by religious unity

(Islam - A Way of Life)

The hostility of the Umayyads to Muhammad and Islam was marked by unrestrained vehemence, partly because it was atavistic. Their reflexes were conditioned by generations of heathenism. They symbolized die-hard opposition to Muhammad when he was in Makka, and they spearheaded an implacable war against Islam when .he migrated to Medina

Philip K Hitti

the core of the opposition, the Umayyads, remained adamant in its hostility (to..." "...(Muhammad

(Islam - A Way of Life)

But there were also a few individuals who found a strong appeal in these new ideas which Muhammad was introducing, collectively called Islam. In fact, they found them so attractive that they accepted them. They abjured their idols and they began to .worship Allah - their Creator

Islam held special appeal for the depressed classes in Makka; for those who were "poor and weak." Muslim historians have noted that the first followers of the apostles and the prophets of the past also, were invariably "poor and weak." When members of these classes became Muslim, they also became aware that as pagans they were despised and rejected by the highly class-conscious and race-conscious aristocracy of Makka but Islam gave them a new self-esteem. As Muslims they found a new pride .in themselves

Most of the early converts to Islam were "poor

and weak." But there were a few rich Muslims also like Hudhayfa bin Utba, and Arqam bin Abil-Arqam. And all those men whom Abu Bakr brought into Islam, such as Uthman, Talha, Zubayr, Abdur Rahman bin Auf, Saad bin Abi Waqqas and Abu Obaidah Aamir ibn al-Jarrah, were also rich. They were members of various clans of .the Quraysh

We may assume that at the beginning, the pagan aristocrats of Makka witnessed the efforts of Islam to win recognition, more with amusement than with irritation, not to speak of the hatred and the hysteria which gripped them a little later. But as the movement began to gather momentum, they sensed that the ideas which Muhammad was broadcasting, were really "dangerous," and that there was nothing "funny" about them. They argued that their forefathers had worshipped idols for countless generations; therefore idolatry was right, and they were not going to abandon it because Muhammad was denouncing it. But Muhammad was not content merely with denouncing their idolatry. Far more dangerous and frightening to the all-grasping Umayyads, were his ideas of economic and social justice which threatened to pull down the fortress of their privileges; to dismantle the peccant system of their monopolies, to demolish the old structure of authority and hierarchy; and to smash all the fossilized institutions of the past. They, therefore, made it clear that privilege was .something they were not going to relinquish - at any cost - come hell or high-water

But the one idea that the self-selected elite

of the Quraysh found most outrageous was the "notion" fostered by Muhammad that the members of the depressed, despised and exploited classes, many of them their slaves, were their equals - the equals of the high and mighty Quraysh! And even more outrageous to them was the idea that if a slave accepted Islam, he actually became superior to all the chiefs and lords of Quraysh. The staple of their life was arrogance and conceit; and equality with their own slaves, ex-slaves and clients, was utterly unthinkable to them. They were obsessed with delusions of their own grandeur, and their "superiority" to the rest of mankind. Equality and brotherhood of men were totally alien and odious ideas to them.

By promulgating the "heterodox" doctrine of equality - the equality of the slave and the master, the poor and the rich; and the Arab and the non-Arab, and by repudiating claims of superiority of the bloodline, Muhammad had committed "lese majesty" against the Quraysh!

The Quraysh worshipped many idols, and race was one of them.

But racial pride is discounted by Quran Majid when it declares that all men have descended from Adam, and Adam was a handful of dust. Iblis (=Satan, the Devil) became the accursed one precisely because he argued for the superiority of his (presumed) high origins as against what he considered to be the lowly origins of man. "Man," he said, "was created from dust whereas I was created from fire." Such a sense of exclusivism which also comes to

a people purely out of a desire to claim superior quality of blood in their being, has .been denounced by Islam in the strongest terms

Iblis) said: "I am better than he (Adam): Thou createdst me from fire, and him Thou) ".createdst from clay

.God) said: "then get tree out from here: for thou art rejected, accursed)

(and My curse shall be on tree till the day of judgment." (Chapter ۳۸; verses ۷۶, ۷۷, ۷۸"

Islam has knocked down the importance of race, nationality, color and privilege, and has forbidden Muslims to classify men into groups on grounds of blood and/or geographical contiguity or particular privilege which they may claim for themselves. In the sight of Quran, the most exalted person is the mutts i i.e., one who loves and obeys Allah most. In Islam, the only test of a person's quality, is his or her love for .Allah. All other trappings of individual life are meaningless

O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise each other). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things). ((Chapter ۴۹; verse ۱۳

But as noted above, the Quraysh of Makka were not in a receptive mood for such ideas. They were perhaps intellectually incapable of grasping them. They considered

them as rank blasphemy. It was then that they resolved to oppose Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam, (may Allah bless him and his Ahlul-Bayt) and to destroy the "heresy" called Islam before it could strike roots and become viable. Their judgment was obscured by their perversity, rapacity, paranoia, and warped perceptions. They were driven by Hubris - the pride that inflates itself beyond the human scale - and by their dense materialism to make such a resolve against Muhammad and Islam.

With this resolution, the Quraysh declared their intention to fight, to the last ditch, in the defence of their idols and fetishes as well as in the defence of their economic and social system which guaranteed their privileges.

Makka was in a state of war!

The Quraysh opened the campaign against Islam by harassing and persecuting the Muslims. At the beginning, persecution was confined to insults, jeers and mockery but as time went on, the Quraysh moved from violence of words to violence of deeds. They hoped that through their violence, they would destroy, or, at least, erode, the faith, of the Muslims. They refrained from inflicting personal injury upon Muhammad himself for fear of provoking reprisals but they had no inhibitions in hurting the rank-and-file Muslims. For a long time, it were the latter who bore the brunt of the malignity and the wrath of the Quraysh.

Muhammad ibn Ishaq

Then the Quraysh incited people against the companions of the Apostle who had become Muslims. Every tribe fell upon the Muslims among them,

beating them and seducing them from their religion. God protected His Apostle from them through his uncle (Abu Talib), who, when he saw what Quraysh were doing, called upon Bani Hashim and Bani AI-Muttalib to stand with him in protecting the Apostle. This they agreed to do, with the exception of Abu Lahab.

(Life of the Messenger of God)

Among the victims of persecution were:

Bilal, the Ethiopian slave of Umayya bin Khalaf. His master and other idolaters tortured him in the savage glare of the sun of Makka, and they tortured him beyond the limits of human endurance. But he was fortified by inner sources of strength and courage which never failed him. Love of Allah and love of His messenger made it possible for him to endure torture with cheer. Abu Bakr brought deliverance to Bilal from torture when he bought him from his master, and set him free. When the Apostle of God and his followers migrated to Medina, he appointed Bilal the first Muezzin of Islam. His rich and powerful voice rang through the air of Medina with the shout of "Allah-o-Akbar" (=Mighty is the Lord). In later years, when the conquest of the peninsula was completed, the Apostle appointed Bilal his secretary of treasury.

Khabab ibn el-Arat. He was a young man of ۲۰ when he accepted Islam. He was a client of Bani Zuhra. The Quraysh tortured him day after day until the time came when he migrated to Medina with the Prophet of Islam.

Suhaib ibn Sinan. Suhaib

came to Makka as a slave. When he became a Muslim, his master beat him up .brutally, but could not break his spirit

Abu Fukaiha, the slave of Safwan bin Umayya. He accepted Islam at the same time as Bilal. Like Bilal, he was also dragged on hot sand by his master with a rope tied to his feet. Abu Bakr bought him and emancipated him. He migrated to Medina but died .before the battle of Badr

Lubina was a female slave of Bani Mumil bin Habib. Amin Dawidar writes in his book, Pictures From the Life of the Prophet (Cairo, ١٩۶٨), that Umar ibn al-Khattab, a future khalifa of the Muslims, tortured her, and whenever he paused, he said: "I have stopped beating you not out of pity but because I am exhausted." He resumed .beating her after he had taken rest

.Abu Bakr bought her and set her free

Zunayra was another female slave. When she declared that she had accepted Islam, Umar ibn al-IChattab and Abu Jahl, took turns in torturing her. They tortured her until she became blind. Amin Dawidar says that a few years later she recovered her sight, and the Quraysh attributed this recovery to the "sorcery" of Muhammad. Abu Bakr .bought her and set her free

Nahdiyya and Umm Unays were two other female slaves, and their masters tortured them for accepting Islam. Abu Bakr is said to have bought both of them and .emancipated them

Muhammad Husayn Haykal

Abu Bakr bought many of the slaves and clients who were...

thus being tortured by the unbelievers. Among these there was even a slave woman whom Abu Bakr had bought from Umar ibn al-Khattab before the latter's conversion. One woman is known to have been tortured to death because of her attachment to .Islam and her refusal to return to the old faith

(The Life of Muhammad, Cairo, ۱۹۳۵)

There were some other Muslims who though not slaves, were "poor and weak," and were, therefore, exposed to the malevolence of the Quraysh. One of them was Abdullah ibn Masood. He was distinguished among the companions of the Prophet by the vast range of his knowledge and learning. He had probably more familiarity with the ethos of Islam and the vitals of the Islamic legal system than most of the .companions of the Prophet

Abdullah ibn Masood was one of the earliest huffaz (=men who know Quran by heart) in Islam. As each new verse was revealed, he memorized it, and he compiled his own copy of Quran. This copy was seized by Uthman bin Affan, the third khalifa, during his .caliphate, and was burned

It is reported that when a new chapter of Quran - Sura Rahman (the ۵۵th chapter) - was revealed, the Apostle of God asked his companions who among them would go into the Kaaba, and read it before the pagans. Other companions staggered but Abdullah ibn Masood volunteered to go. He went into the Kaaba and read the new chapter out aloud. Next to Muhammad Mustafa himself, Abdullah ibn Masood was

the first man to read Quran in Kaaba before a hostile crowd of the idolaters. They .mauled him, not once but repeatedly, but they could not intimidate him into silence

Muhammad ibn Ishaq

Yahya b. Urwa b. al-Zubayr told me as from his father that the first man to read the .Quran loudly in Makka after the Apostle was Abdullah bin Masood

(The Life of the Messenger of God)

M. Shibli, the Indian historian, says in his Seera that Abu Bakr was the equal of the other chiefs of Quraysh in rank and wealth yet he "could not read Quran out aloud" (in .(the Kaaba

One of the earliest companions of Muhammad Mustafa was Abu Dharr el-Ghiffari. He belonged to the tribe of Ghiffar which made its living by brigandage. From travellers he heard that a prophet had appeared in Makka who preached a new creed called Islam, and exhorted people to abandon idolatry, to worship only One God, to speak only the truth, to look after the poor, to feed the hungry, not to defame women, and not to bury their daughters alive. Idolatry had repelled Abu Dharr even before he heard about the message of Islam and the work of Muhammad. In fact, he lived like an ascetic, and did not take any part in his tribe's forays upon caravans of traders and .pilgrims. He made his living as a shepherd

Abu Dharr sent his brother to Makka to verify the reports he had heard about ,Muhammad. The latter went to Makka, met Muhammad

talked with him, posed many questions to him, heard him read Quran, and then returned home to report to Abu Dharr what he had seen and heard. Among other things, he said to Abu Dharr: "You are already doing many of the things that ".Muhammad is doing and preaching

Abu Dharr, thenceforth, was attracted like a moth by the Light of Faith burning in Makka. In his eagerness to see the Prophet with his own eyes, and to hear Quran .from his own lips, he decided to visit Makka

In Makka, Abu Dharr was a stranger. His brother had told him that Makka was seething with hostility toward the new Prophet. Not knowing, therefore, who might be a friend and who a foe of the Prophet, he hesitated to ask anyone about him. He spent a whole day in the shade of the Kaaba watching passersby. In the evening, Ali ibn Abi Talib chanced to walk past him, and noticing that he was a stranger in town, invited him to his home for supper. Abu Dharr accepted the invitation, and later, apprised Ali of the purpose of his visit to Makka which was to see the Prophet of Islam. Ali, of course, was only too glad to conduct his new friend into the presence of his master, .Muhammad Mustafa

Abu Dharr and the Prophet exchanged greetings. Within a few moments of his meeting with the Prophet, Abu Dharr was convinced that he was in the presence of a true messenger of God. From

the messenger of God, he heard the message of God (Quran), and learned the meaning of Islam. He found both the messenger and the message irresistible. He was carried away by the appeal of Islam. In fact, he wondered, how could he ever live without Islam. He buried the past in which he had lived without Islam.

The first act of Abu Dharr, after his induction into Islam, was one of defiance to the infidels in Makka. He went into the precincts of the Kaaba, and shouted:

There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is His messenger

As expected, the infidels fell upon him, and started raining blows upon him. From this brawl he was rescued by Abbas ibn Abdul Muttalib, an uncle of the Prophet. He told the Quraysh that Abu Dharr belonged to the tribe of Ghiffar whose territory lay astride the caravan routes to the north, and if they did any harm to him, his tribesmen would bar access of their caravans to Syria.

Abu Dharr el-Ghiffari is one of the most remarkable men in the history of Islam. He publicly showed his contempt for the Quraysh and their presumption of power - not only in Makka when they were idolaters but also in later times in Medina when they had accepted Islam but had revived pre-Islamic capitalism. He was the most outspoken, and one of the most fearless men among all the companions of Muhammad Mustafa who once said that "the sky did not spread its canopy on any

".man who was more truthful than Abu Dharr

Abu Dharr was like an elemental force looking for a purpose in life, and he found it in .Islam. He was the Voice of the Conscience of Islam

Fear of violence by the Quraysh did not deter these heroic and noble souls from .accepting Islam, and each of them left a mark upon it by his or her sacrifices

Also notable among early Muslims, was Mas'ab ibn Umayr, a cousin of the father of Muhammad Mustafa. Many years later, at the First Pledge of Aqaba, the citizens of Yathrib (Medina) requested the Prophet to send with them a teacher of Quran, and the choice fell upon him. This made him the first "official" in Islam. He was also the .standard-bearer of the army of Islam in the battle of Uhud but was killed in action

If a member of a pagan family accepted Islam, he was ostracized by it for all time, without any hope for him of rapprochement. Many Makkans saw Islam as a "divisive force" which was breaking up their families, and some among them thought that they ought to check this "divisiveness" from spreading. But beyond the threat of using force to suppress the new movement, they could not think of anything else that would prove more efficacious in halting its progress. They also thought that if they did not act swiftly and resolutely enough, it was not unlikely that every house in Makka would become a battle-ground in which the protagonists of

the old and the new faiths would be locked up in a sanguinary struggle against each other. There were some others among them who imagined that Muhammad was prompted by ambition to denounce their ancestral mode of worship and their idols. All of them put their heads together and tried to think of some unconventional solution of the problem. After long deliberation, they decided to send Utba, one of the chiefs of Quraysh, to meet Muhammad, and to try to "talk him out" of his mission. Utba was .noted for his persuasive ability

Utba called on Muhammad Mustafa, and said: "O Muhammad! Do not plant seeds of dissension and discord among the Arabs, and do not curse the gods and goddesses our ancestors have worshipped for centuries, and we are worshipping today. If your aim in doing so is to become a political leader, we are willing to acknowledge you as the sovereign of Makka. If you want wealth, you just have to say so, and we shall provide you with all that we can. And if you are desirous of marriage in some noble ".family, you name it, and we shall arrange it for you

Utba concluded his speech and hoped that he would get from Muhammad a favorable and a positive response. But to his surprise, Muhammad didn't show any interest in rank or wealth or beauty. Instead, he read out to him the Sura Sajda, (Chapter ۳۲ of .Quran Majid), the newest revelation from Heaven

Muhammad never allowed a compromise

.on principle to weaken his moral authority

Utba heard in silence, and then returned to the Quraysh to report on the outcome of his embassy. He advised the Quraysh to leave Muhammad alone, and not to meddle .with him any more

He is also reported to have told them that if Muhammad failed in his mission, then they (i.e. the Quraysh) would lose nothing; but if he was successful, then they would .share all his glory and power

But the Quraysh did not accept Utba's advice for moderation and restraint in dealing .with Muhammad and his followers

The Quraysh continued to harass the Prophet and to persecute the Muslims. But they also kept trying to think of some new wrinkle in their campaign against Islam that .might yield better results than all their violence had done until then

Muhammad Mustafa was protected by his uncle and guardian, Abu Talib. As long as Abu Talib was alive, the infidels could not molest his nephew. Some of them came forward with the new idea that they ought perhaps to try to persuade Abu Talib himself to waive his protection of Muhammad in the name of tribal solidarity. Tribal solidarity is basic for survival in desert life. This was a truly bright idea, and was applauded by all the tribal leaders. After all, tribal solidarity was something much too important to be treated with levity even by Abu Talib, notwithstanding all his love for .his nephew

The Quraysh decided to send an embassy to Abu Talib. They carefully selected

the members of a delegation which called on him, and appealed to him in the name of the "tribal solidarity" of the Quraysh to waive his protection of Muhammad who was ."disrupting" that solidarity

Abu Talib, of course, had no intention of waiving his protection of, or of withdrawing his support to, Muhammad. But he mollified the delegates of the Quraysh with pious .platitudes and placatory words, and sent them back

The delegates also realized that they had come home from a "phantom-chase." But they were unfazed by their failure, and a little later, they made another attempt to inveigle Abu Talib into deserting Muhammad. A new delegation went to see him and this time, its members took with them a handsome young man, one Ammarra ibn Waleed, whom they offered to Abu Talib for a "son" if he would surrender .Muhammad to them

Abu Talib must have laughed at the naivete of the infidels. Did they seriously believe that he would give them his own son for them to kill him, and would rear one of their sons as his own? The idea was most ludicrous but once again Abu Talib handled the .delicate situation with his customary finesse, and they went away

The second attempt of the leaders of Quraysh to coax Abu Talib into giving up Muhammad, had also failed. When the meaning of this failure sank into their minds, they argued that peaceful attempts to solve the problem had all been unsuccessful, and now they ought to try something really

.drastic

In sheer exasperation and frustration, the policy-makers of the Quraysh adopted a "hard-line" and sent their third and the last delegation to see Abu Talib. Its purpose was to compel him to surrender Muhammad to them. The leaders of the delegation presented an ultimatum to Abu Talib; either he had to surrender Muhammad to them .or else he would have to face the consequences of his refusal to do so

Abu Talib was a man of cheerful temperament and a sunny disposition but it was a somber day in his life. The Quraysh, he knew, were not bluffing. He, therefore, called Muhammad, and apprised him of the purport of the Qurayshi representation, and then added: "O life of your uncle! Do not place a burden upon me that I may find ".beyond my strength to carry

Muhammad answered: "O my uncle! If the Quraysh place the sun on my right hand and the moon on my left, I shall not refrain from proclaiming the Oneness of God. In the execution of this duty, either I shall succeed and Islam will spread, or, if I fail, I ".shall perish in the attempt

Abu Talib, of course, had no intention of dissuading his nephew from preaching Islam. He was only testing his resolution. Now convinced and satisfied that he (Muhammad) would not falter, he said: "Go my son, and do whatever you like. No one will dare to do ".any harm to you

Sir William Muir

(but the thought of desertion by his kind protector (Abu Talib..."

overcame him (Mohammed). He burst into tears, and turned to depart. Then Abu Talib called aloud: `Son of my brother! Come back.' So he returned. And Abu Talib said, `Depart in peace, my nephew, and say whatever thou desirest. For by the Lord, I will ".not, in any wise, give thee up ever

(The Life of Mohammed, London, ١٨٧٧)

Muhammad Husayn Haykal

Abu Talib said: `Go forth, my nephew, and say what you will. By the same God I swear '.I shall never betray you to your enemies

Abu Talib communicated his resolution to Banu Hashim and Banu al-Muttalib and spoke to them about his nephew with great admiration and deep appreciation of the sublimity of Muhammad's position. He asked them all to protect Muhammad against the Quraysh. All of them pledged to do so except Abu Lahab who declared openly his .enmity to him and his withdrawal to the opposite camp

Quraysh inflicted upon Muhammad's companions all sorts of injuries from which he was saved only through the protection of Abu Talib, Banu Hashim, and Banu al-.Muttalib

(The Life of Muhammad, Cairo, ١٩٣٥)

Foiled and checkmated repeatedly in this manner by Abu Talib, the patience of the polytheists reached the breaking point. Their virulence had been building up for years. After the failure of their third embassy to Abu Talib, they became desperate and reckless, and much more insolent and menacing toward the Muslims. They resolved to let loose all their frustrations and pent-up fury upon them - upon the unprotected Muslims, and to crush the

.new faith with terror and brutality

!The Quraysh, it appeared, were going berserk

The first victims of pagan attrition and aggression were those Muslims who had no tribal affiliation in Makka. Yasar and his wife, Sumayya, and their son, Ammar, had no tribal affiliation. Therefore they were "foreigners," in Makka, and there was no one to protect them. All three were savagely tortured by Abu Jahl and the other infidels. Sumayya, Yasar's wife, died while she was being tortured. She thus became the First Martyr in Islam. A little later, her husband, Yasar, was also tortured to death, and he .became the Second Martyr in Islam

In this manner the wife and the husband made their choice in the eternal conflict between light and darkness, good and evil, truth and falsehood, right and wrong, and Islam and paganism. The choice was difficult but they had no hang ups in the matter, .and gladly paid for it with their lives! They made their lives an oblation for Islam

!Quraysh had stained its hands with innocent blood

In the honor-roll of martyrs, Sumayya and her husband, Yasar, rank among the highest. They were killed for no reason other than their devotion to Allah and their love for Islam and Muhammad Mustafa. Those Muslims who were killed in the battles of Badr and Uhud, had an army to defend and to support them. But Sumayya and her husband, Yasar, had no one to defend them. They bore no arms, and they were the most defenseless of all martyrs

of Islam. By sacrificing their lives, they highlighted the truth of Islam and they built .strength into its structure

Their martyrdom was a triumph of Faith over materialism. Friend and foe were flabbergasted to see them defy death. They made the "tradition" of sacrifice and .martyrdom an integral part of the ethos of Islam

Among the believers are men who have been true to their covenant with Allah: of them some have completed their vow (to the extreme), and some (still) wait: but they have never changed (their determination) in the least. (Quran Majid. Chapter ٣٣, verse (٢٣

Translator's Note

In the fight for Truth were (and are) many who sacrificed their all - resources, knowledge, influence, life itself - in the Cause, and never wavered. If they won the (crown of martyrdom, they were blessed. (A. Yusuf Ali

Earlier, Sumayya, Yasar and Ammar had won the distinction of being the First Muslim Family in the umma. Now they won another distinction: Sumayya and Yasar became the First Two Martyrs in Islam. Muhammad Mustafa, the Messenger of Allah, who knew how and why they were being tortured, had comforted them; he had advised patience (sabr) of a true believer upon them, and had told them that Allah had built for them a palace in Paradise. Their son, Ammar, was also destined to wear the Crown of .Martyrdom - though in later times

If the Yasars were the First Family of Muslims, they were also the First Family of Martyrs. Each member of this blessed family

died vindicating the principles of Justice and Truth enshrined in Islam. God was pleased to bestow upon them two of the greatest honors – Primacy in Faith and .Primacy in Martyrdom

As noted before, Bilal, IChabab ibn el-Arat, Suhaib Rumi and other poor and unprotected Muslims were made to stand on the torrid sand, and were flogged by the infidels. Food and water were denied to them in the vain hope that hunger and thirst would compel them to abandon Muhammad and Islam. In persecuting the Muslims, .the infidels were consistent, persistent and innovative

If the Quraysh found Muhammad alone, they seized the opportunity to molest him. They of course wished to kill him but they had to curb this urge. If they had killed him, .they would have touched off vendetta or even civil war

One afternoon, Muhammad Mustafa, the Messenger of Allah, went into the Kaaba to read Quran. He was in the act of reading when suddenly he was surrounded by the polytheists. They mobbed him, and they might have done him some great harm but for the intervention of Harith ibn Abi Hala, the nephew and adopted son of Khadija, who arrived on the scene just then. He entered the melee to defend the Messenger of .Allah from the violence of the idolaters and polytheists of Makka

Harith ibn Abi Hala kicked the pagans and fought with his fists. Most probably he too was carrying a sword or a dagger as all Arabs did but he did not wish to

draw it and shed blood in the Kaaba. But in the fracas, one of the idolaters drew his dagger, and stabbed him repeatedly. He fell in a pool of his own blood, and died from multiple wounds in his chest, shoulders and temple. He was the first Muslim to be .killed in the precincts of the Kaaba

Harith was a young man of seventeen, and he gave his own life to save the life of Muhammad Mustafa, the Messenger of Allah. By doing so, he won the aureole of martyrdom. He was the Third Martyr in Islam. His death, so early in life, made the Prophet extremely sad. For Khadija, Harith's death was a personal loss. She had brought him up as her own child. But she forgot her own sorrow so she could provide .emotional support to her spouse in his sorrow

Although the Arab historians are silent on this subject, much bitter fighting must have taken place in Makka between the Muslims and the infidels during the years before the migration of the Prophet of Islam to Medina. Abu Talib protected his nephew as .long as he lived, and after his death, his son, Ali, took charge of this duty

Ali was still a teenager when he appointed himself the body-guard of Muhammad Mustafa. After the murder, in Kaaba, of Harith ibn Abi Hala, by the pagans, Ali accompanied his master whenever the latter went out of his house, and stood between him and his enemies. If a ruffian approached Muhammad

menacingly, Ali at once challenged him, and came to grips with him. Writing about this :period of the history of Islam, the British historian, D. S. Margoliouth, says

The persons whose admission to Islam was most welcomed were men of physical" strength, and much actual fighting must have taken place at Mecca before the Flight; else the readiness with which the Moslems after the Flight could produce from their number tried champions, would be inexplicable. A tried champion must have been tried somewhere; and no external fights are recorded or are even the subject of an ".allusion for this period

(Mohammed and the Rise of Islam, London, ۱۹۳۱)

There were no external fights in Makka before the Hijra (=Migration of the Prophet from Makka to Medina); but there were many in the streets and open spaces of the city. The young hoods of Makka threw rocks or date stones at the Prophet when he walked past them, and Ali bloodied their noses, battered their teeth, and broke their limbs. It was in these "battlefields" that Ali, the young lion, acquired all his martial skills. These "battles" in Makka were a "dress rehearsal" of the role he was destined to play a few years later in Medina in the armed struggle of Islam and polytheism. It was also in these early days, before the Hijra (=Migration) that Ali became "the first line of the defence of Islam." In fact, he also became, at the same time, the second line and the last line of

.the defence of Islam. This, he and he alone, was to remain for the rest of his life

Quraysh tortured the bodies of the unprotected Muslims in Makka in the hope that they would compel them to forswear Islam but they failed. No one from these "poor and weak" Muslims ever abjured Islam. Adverse circumstances can collaborate to break even the strongest of men, and for the Muslims, the circumstances could not .have been more adverse

.But those circumstances could not break them. Islam held them together

For these "poor and weak" Muslims, Islam was a "heady" experience. It had pulled life together for them; had put meaning into it; had run purpose through it; and had put horizons around it. They, therefore, spurned security, comforts and luxuries of life; and some among them like Sumayya and her husband, Yasar, spurned life itself; but they upheld their Faith. They died in the macabre violence against them of the .enemies of Islam but they did not compromise with falsehood

May Allah be pleased with these heroic and noble souls and may He bless them. Their faith and morale were, as the Quraysh discovered, just as unconquerable as the faith and morale of their master and leader, Muhammad Mustafa, the Messenger of Allah. They were the diamonds that he found in the rocks of the world. They were few in number but priceless in value; to be expressed, not by quantity but only by quality, .and that quality was sublime

Chapter ۸: The Two Migrations

Muhammad Mustafa, the Messenger of

Allah, shared all the sorrows and afflictions of his followers who were being tortured for believing in Tawhid but he had no means to protect them. When it appeared that there was going to be no deescalation in the violence against and persecution of the Muslims by the pagans, he suggested to them to leave Makka, and to seek sanctuary in Abyssinia which was then ruled by a Christian king, well-known for being a just and .a God-fearing man

Following this suggestion, a group of Muslims, comprising eleven men and four women, left Makka and went to Abyssinia. The group included Uthman bin Affan, a future khalifa of the Muslims, and Zubayr bin al-Awwam, a cousin of the Prophet. The Prophet appointed one of his principal companions, Uthman bin Mazoon, as the leader .of this group

Muhammad ibn Ishaq

When the Apostle saw the afflictions of his companions and that though he escaped them because of his standing with Allah and his uncle, Abu Talib, he could not protect them, he said to them: "If you were to go to Abyssinia (it would be better for you), for the king (there) will not tolerate injustice and it is a friendly country, until such time as Allah shall relieve you from distress." Thereupon his companions went to Abyssinia, being afraid of apostasy and fleeing to God with their religion. This was the first hijra in Islam. (The Life of the Messenger of God) The first migration took place in the fifth year of the

.Call (Proclamation), i.e., in A.D. ۶۱۵

The king of Abyssinia welcomed the Muslim refugees from Makka into his kingdom. He gave them sanctuary, and they found peace and security, and they enjoyed .freedom of worship

It is reported that about a year later, the Muslim refugees in Abyssinia heard rumors that the Quraysh in Makka had accepted Islam. If it was so, then there was no reason for them to live in exile, and they were very homesick. They, therefore, returned to Makka. But in Makka they found out that not only the reports of the conversion of the Quraysh to Islam were false but also that the latter had stepped up the persecution of the Muslims. They, therefore, left Makka once again but not alone. Many other Muslims accompanied them to Abyssinia. This new group comprised ۸۳ men and ۱۸ women, and may have included both the old and the new emigrants; among them were Abdur Rahman ibn Auf, Abu Salma Makhzoomi, and Abdullah ibn Masood. Muhammad Mustafa, the Messenger of Allah, appointed his cousin, Jaafer ibn Abi .Talib, the elder brother of Ali, as the leader of this group

The second migration of the Muslims to Abyssinia took place in the sixth year of the .Call (Proclamation), which corresponds to A.D. ۶۱۶

The migration of the Muslims, and their reception in Abyssinia, alarmed the Quraysh of Makka. They entertained the fear that the Muslims in Abyssinia might grow in strength or might find new allies, and then, some day, might return to

Makka to challenge them. Therefore, to head off this potential threat, such as they saw it, they decided to send an embassy to the court of the king of Abyssinia to .request him to extradite the Muslims to Makka

The Muslim refugees who had expected to be left in peace, were surprised and dismayed by the arrival, in the Abyssinian capital, of an embassy from Makka, led by a certain Amr bin Ass. Amr had brought rich presents for the king and his courtiers to .ingratiate himself with them

When the king gave audience to the emissary of the Quraysh, he said that the Muslims in Abyssinia were not refugees from persecution but were fugitives from justice and law; and requested him to extradite them to Makka. The king, however, wanted to hear the other side of the story also before giving any judgment, and summoned Jaafer ibn Abi Talib, the leader of the refugees, to answer the charges .against the Muslims

Jaafer made a most memorable defence. Following is a summary of his speech in the .Abyssinian court in reply to the questions posed by the Christian king

O king! We were ignorant people and we lived like wild animals. The strong among us" lived by preying upon the weak. We obeyed no law and we acknowledged no authority save that of brute force. We worshipped idols made of stone or wood, and we knew nothing of the human dignity. Then God in His mercy sent to us His messenger who was himself

one of us. We knew about his truthfulness and his integrity. His character was exemplary, and he was the most well-born of the Arabs. He forbade us to worship idols and he invited us to the worship of One God. He exhorted us to speak the truth, and to protect the weak, the poor, the humble, the widows and the orphans. He ordered us to show respect to women, and never to slander them. We obeyed him and followed his teachings. Most of the people in our country are still polytheists, and they resented our conversion to the new faith. They began to persecute us, and it was in order to escape from persecution by them that we sought and found sanctuary in ".your kingdom

When Jaafer concluded his speech, the king declared that he was convinced of his veracity, and added, to the great disappointment of Amr bin Ass, that the Muslims .could live in his kingdom as long as they wished, without any fear

But Amr bin Ass bethought himself of a new argument which, he felt confident, would appeal to the king who was a Christian. If it did, he was certain, it would tilt the scales .against the Muslims, and they would be extradited

On the following day, therefore, he returned to the court and said to the king that he (the king) ought to waive his protection of the Muslims because they rejected the .divine nature of Jesus, and asserted that he was a mortal like other men

When questioned on this point by the king, Jaafer said: "Our judgment of Jesus is what was revealed to our Prophet, viz., that Jesus is the servant of God, and is His ".Prophet, His Spirit, and His Command given unto Mary, the innocent virgin

The king said to Jaafer: "Jesus is just what you have stated him to be, and is nothing more than that." Then turning toward the Muslims, he said: "Go to your homes and live in peace. I shall never give you up to your enemies." He refused to extradite the Muslims, returned the presents which Amr bin Ass had brought, and dismissed his .embassy

Washington Irving

Among the refugees to Abyssinia, there was Jaafer, the son of Abu Talib, and brother " of Ali, consequently the cousin of Mohammed. He was a man of persuasive eloquence and a most prepossessing appearance. He stood forth before the king of Abyssinia, and expounded the doctrines of Islam with zeal and power. The king who was a Nestorian Christian, found these doctrines so similar in many respects to those of his sect and so opposed to the gross idolatry of the Koreishites, that so far from giving up the fugitives, he took them more especially into favor and protection, and returning to Amr b. Ass and Abdullah, the presents they had brought, dismissed them from his ".court

(The Life of Mohammed)

The Muslims spent many years in Abyssinia. Thirteen years later, they returned, not ,(to Makka but to Medina - in ٧ A.H. (A.D. ۶۲۸

p: ۱۰۹

i.e., seven years after the migration of the Apostle of God from Makka to Medina. .Their arrival synchronized with the conquest of Khyber by the Muslims

Jaafer ibn Abi Talib was the leader of all those Muslims who had migrated to Abyssinia in ۶۱۵ and ۶۱۶. He appears to have been the only member of the clan of Bani Hashim to leave Makka for Abyssinia with the other refugees. All other members of Bani Hashim .stayed in Makka

Chapter ۹: Hamza Accepts Islam

Muhammad Mustafa, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and his Ahlul-Bayt), though safe under the protection of his uncle, Abu Talib, was not immune from harassment by the infidels. Whenever they found an opportunity for baiting him, they didn't miss it. On one occasion, Abu Jahl found him alone, and used much offensive and vulgar language toward him. That same evening when his uncle, Hamza bin Abdul Muttalib, came home from a hunting expedition, his slave-girl recounted to him the tale of Abu Jahl's gratuitous insolence toward him (Muhammad), and the latter's .forbearance, of which she had been an eye-witness

Hamza was a warrior, a hunter and a sportsman, and was little interested in the day-to-day affairs of the city. But Abu Jahl's conduct toward his nephew so roused his anger that he seized his bow, went into the assembly of the Quraysh where he (Abu Jahl) was reviewing the events of the day to his compeers, struck him at his head with :his bow, causing it to bleed, and shouted

".I too have become a Muslim"

This was a challenge to Abu Jahl but he figured that silence was the best part of valor, and did not tangle with Hamza, even restraining his friends who wished to rise in his .defence

Hamza became a devout Muslim and a champion of Islam. He was the comrade-in-arms of his other nephew, Ali ibn Abi Talib, and it were both of them who carried slaughter and dismay into the ranks of the Makkan army in the battle of Badr - the .first battle of Islam - fought a few years later

The battle of Uhud was the second battle of Islam. In that battle, Hamza killed one of the standard-bearers of the pagans of Makka. When they charged the Muslim line, Hamza plunged into their midst. He was hacking his way through their ranks when Wahshi, an Abyssinian slave, hurled a javelin at him. Wahshi was engaged for this very purpose by Hinda, the wife of Abu Sufyan and the mother of Muawiya. The .javelin caught Hamza in his groin; he fell on the ground and died immediately

In the battle of Uhud the Muslims were defeated. After their rout, Hinda and the other harpies she had brought with her from Makka, mutilated the bodies of the slain Muslims. Hinda cut open Hamza's abdomen, plucked out his liver and chewed it up. Muhammad ibn Umar Waqidi, the historian, says that she made a fire in the battlefield, roasted Hamza's heart and liver and ate them. Not satisfied

with this, she cut the limbs, the ears and the nose of Hamza, strung them into a "necklace," and entered Makka wearing it as a "trophy" of victory.

Hamza had killed Utba, the father of Hinda, in the battle of Badr. In the battle of Uhud, she slaked her thirst for vengeance which had given her no rest since the battle of Badr.

Muhammad Mustafa, the Apostle of God, was deeply aggrieved at the death and at the mutilation of the body of such a stalwart of Islam as Hamza. He bestowed upon him the titles of the "Lion of God," and the "Chief of the Martyrs."

Hamza accepted Islam in the fifth year of the Proclamation. May God be pleased with him, and bless him.

Chapter ١٠: Umar's Conversion to Islam

The most notable event of the year ۶ of the Call was the conversion to Islam of Umar ibn al-Khattab, a future khalifa of the Muslims. He was one of the most rabid enemies of Islam and Muhammad Mustafa, the Messenger of Allah, and was a great tormentor of the Muslims. The modern Egyptian historian, Amin Dawidar, says in his book, Pictures From the Life of the Prophet, that Umar's hatred of Islam, and his hostility to Muhammad Mustafa, were matched only by the hatred of and hostility to them, of his own maternal uncle, Abu Jahl.

It is said that one day Umar resolved, in sheer exasperation, to kill Muhammad Mustafa, and thereby to extinguish the flame of Islam itself. He left his home with

.this intention

As noted before, the Muslims at this time (the end of the year ۶) still gathered in the house of Arqam ibn Abil Arqam to say their congregational prayers. They were just beginning to assemble, when one of them, looking out the window, saw Umar approaching the house with a drawn sword. In a state of considerable alarm, he told other members of the congregation what he saw. Presumably, they too were alarmed. But Hamza, who was also present in the house of Arqam, reassured them, and said that if Umar was coming with good intentions, then it was all right; if not, then he (Hamza) would run him (Umar) through with his (Umar's) own sword. But it so .happened that Umar had come with the intention of accepting Islam, and he did

The story is told that Umar was going toward Dar-ul-Arqam with the intention of killing the Prophet when a passer-by stopped him, and informed him that his own sister and her husband had become Muslims; and advised him to put his own house in .order before undertaking any other grandiose and chimerical project

Muhammad Husayn Haykal

Umar went there (to Dar-ul-Arqam) resolved to kill Muhammad and thus relieve the Quraysh of its burden, restore its ravaged unity, and re-establish respect for the gods that Muhammad had castigated. On the road to Makkah he was met by Nu'aym ibn Abdullah. Upon learning what Umar was about, Nu'aym said, "By God, you have deceived yourself, O Umar! Do you think that

Banu Abd Manaf would let you run around alive once you kill Muhammad. Your sister "?is a Muslim now. Why don't you return to your own house and set it straight

(The Life of Muhammad, Cairo, ۱۹۳۵)

Umar was furious to hear this. He immediately changed his direction from the house of Arqam to the house of his sister to investigate the allegation. In reply to his .question, she gave him a discreet but evasive answer

Muhammad ibn Ishaq

Umar came to the door (of the house of his sister) as Khabbab (a companion of the Prophet) was studying the Sura Taha and When the Sun is Overthrown. The pagans used to call this reading "rubbish." When Umar came in, his sister saw that he meant mischief and hid the sheets from which they were reading. Khabbab slipped away into the house. Umar asked what was the gibberish he had heard to which she answered ...that it was merely conversation between them

(The Life of the Messenger of God)

Umar exploded in wrath at what he thought to be a prevarication, and struck his sister in her face. The blow caused her mouth to bleed. Umar was going to strike again but the sight of blood made him pause. He suddenly appeared to relent, and then in a changed tone asked her to show him what she was reading. She sensed a change in him but said: "You are an unclean idolater, and I cannot allow you to touch the word of ".Allah

,Umar immediately went home

washed himself, returned to his sister's house, read the text of Quran, and then went to Arqam's house where he bore witness to the Unity of the Creator and the .Prophethood of Muhammad

Sir William Muir says that Umar's conversion to Islam took place at the close of the .sixth year of Mohammed's mission

Sir William Muir

It (Umar's conversion) occurred in Dzul Hajj, the last month of the year. The believers are said now to have amounted in all to ۴۰ men and ten women; or by other accounts, .to ۴۵ men and eleven women

(The Life of Mohammed, London, ۱۸۷۷)

.Umar was in his thirties when he became a Muslim

Muhammad Husayn Haykal

At that time, Umar ibn al-Khattab was a mature man of thirty to thirty-five years of .age

(The Life of Muhammad, Cairo, ۱۹۳۵)

Chapter ۱۱: The Siege of Bani Hashim

The year ۶ of the Proclamation was drawing to a close. The pagans of Makka had already spent three years campaigning against Islam. They had succeeded in generating much bitterness and hostility against the Muslims, but they had nothing to show for it. Against the Muslims, they had used every weapon in their arsenal ranging from attempts to dissuade to seduce to tempt to insult and to ridicule. They had threatened to use force and they had actually used force to blot out Islam, or, at least, to contain it, but all their efforts had failed. The Muslims had withstood all their .attacks. The strength of the faith of the Muslims had baffled their persecutors

These repeated failures compelled the

Quraysh, particularly the members of its Umayyad clan, to reassess the situation vis-a-vis Muhammad and Islam, and some of them tried to see their problem from a new angle. In their search for a solution to the vexatious problem, it slowly began to dawn upon them that their enemy was not the group of poverty-stricken Muslims in Makka. Their real enemy - the enemy of the idolaters and the polytheists - they realized, was Abu Talib! After all it was Abu Talib who was protecting Muhammad and Islam so consistently and tenaciously. The Muslims on the other hand, had no power to protect .Muhammad. In fact, they were themselves in desperate need of protection

The long and bitter experience of the Quraysh left no doubt in their minds that the author of their frustrations in their war on Islam, was Abu Talib and no one else. Therefore, they concluded that they would never break the impasse facing them, by hunting or persecuting the group of indigent Muslims in Makka while their real enemy .- Abu Talib - was free to swagger in their midst, scoffing, as if, at them

.The Quraysh had at last succeeded in identifying their real enemy

This success in "enemy identification" had the impact of revelation upon the leaders of the Quraysh, and they decided to map out a new strategy in their war against .Muhammad and Islam

Abd-al-Rahman 'Azzam'

Finally, the Makkan oligarchy decided in desperation to take steps against Abu Talib." In their opinion, he was the real protector

of the blasphemy, although still a revered upholder of Makkan institutions and "...unconverted to Muhammad's faith (sic). They agreed to send him an ultimatum

(The Eternal Message of Muhammad, London, ١٩۶۴)

In the past, the Quraysh had made many attempts to "isolate" Muhammad from his tribe, and they had hoped that they would either coax or bluff Abu Talib into waiving his support to and protection of his nephew and of Islam. If they could "isolate" Muhammad from the Bani Hashim, they were convinced, they would be able to solve .the complex and thorny problem by the simple process of "liquidating" him

But Abu Talib did not let the Quraysh "isolate" Muhammad. Not only he was himself protecting his nephew, he had also rallied the clans of Bani Hashim and Bani al-Muttalib behind him. These two clans were monolithic in their support of Muhammad, .and the infidels found themselves powerless before them

After long debate and deliberation, the Quraysh agreed that the "intractability" and the "intransigence" of the Bani Hashim called for sterner measures against them, and they decided to isolate and to ostracize not only Muhammad but his protector, Abu .Talib, and the clans of Bani Hashim and Bani al-Muttalib as well

It would be quite logical to assume that any attempt to ostracize Bani Hashim would lead to a polarization of the groupings in Makka. Everyone in Makka would have to declare himself for or against the Bani Hashim. But it soon became obvious that in this confrontation, the Bani Hashim would find

.the whole of Arabia ranged against them

Muhammad Husayn Haykal

It is nearly impossible for us to imagine the intensity and extent of the efforts which Quraysh expended in its struggle against Muhammad, or its perseverance during many long years of that struggle. The Quraysh threatened Muhammad and his relatives, especially his uncles. It ridiculed him and his message, and it insulted him as well as his followers. It commissioned its poets to parody him with their sharp wits and to direct their most caustic stings against his teachings. It inflicted harm and injury on him and on his followers. It offered him bribes of money, of kingdom and power; in fact, of all that which satisfied the most fastidious of men. It impoverished the Muslims by destroying their commerce and trade, and it banished and dispersed them from their own country. It warned Muhammad and them that war with all its horrors would befall them. As a last resort, it began a boycott of them designed to starve .them

(The Life of Muhammad, Cairo, ۱۹۳۵)

A few days before the beginning of the year ۷, the leaders of the various clans of the Quraysh met in a solemn conclave in the "town hall" of Makka, and, they drafted and signed a document which stipulated that unless the clan of Bani Hashim surrendered Muhammad to them, they would subject it to an economic and social boycott. They pledged themselves not to buy anything from, nor to sell anything to, the members of the Bani

.Hashim, and they placed intermarriage with them under proscription

This agreement or covenant was sent to the other tribes for ratification, and when .they had ratified it, it was solemnly suspended on the wall of the Kaaba

!The ratification of this covenant by the tribes was an act of belligerence

Abu Talib had to size up the new situation. He could clearly see that a storm system was converging upon the Bani Hashim. After the tribal endorsement of the covenant to boycott the Bani Hashim, the atmosphere in Makka changed palpably; it became so explosive that they found themselves in dire straits. Abu Talib realized that it would be extremely perilous for the clan to live in the city where any moment, the enemy could set fire to its houses. In the interests of the security of the clan, therefore, he decided to leave Makka, and to seek safety for it in a ravine at the edge of the city. The ravine had some natural defenses, and it was, in any case, safer for the Bani Hashim to live .in it, than to live in their houses which were very much vulnerable to attack

On the first day of the year ۷ of the Call or Proclamation, the two clans of Bani Hashim and Bani Al-Muttalib, moved out of the city, and took abode in a ravine which later !came to be known as Shi'b Abu Talib. They were now in a state of siege

.It was going to be a long siege

Muhammad Husayn Haykal

The

pact into which the clans of Quraysh entered for boycotting Muhammad and .blockading the Muslims continued to be observed for three consecutive years

(The Life of Muhammad, Cairo, ۱۹۳۵)

Marmaduke Pickthall

For three years, the Prophet was shut up with all his kinsfolk in their stronghold which .was situated in one of the gorges that run down to Mecca

(Introduction to the Translation of Holy Quran, ۱۹۷۵)

The story of the siege of the Bani Hashim is a stirring chapter in the epic of Islam, and has been depicted by every historian of the subject, among them Muir and :Margoliouth

Sir William Muir

the Coreish entered into a confederacy against the Hashimites - that they would..." not marry their women, nor would give their own in marriage to them; that they would sell nothing to them, nor buy aught from them; and that dealings with them of .every kind should cease

The ban was carefully committed to writing, and sealed with three seals. When all had bound themselves by it, the record was hung up in the Kaaba, and religious sanction .thus given to its provisions

The Hashimites were unable to withstand the tide of public opinion which set in thus violently against them, and apprehensive perhaps that it might be only the prelude of open attacks, or of blows in the dark still more fatal, they retired into the secluded quarter of the city, known as the Sheb of Abu Talib. It was formed by one of the defiles or indentations of the mountains, where the projecting rocks

of Abu Cobeis pressed upon the eastern outskirts of Mecca. It was entered on the cityside by a low gateway, through which a camel passed with difficulty. On all other .sides it was detached from the town by cliffs and buildings

On the first night of the first month of the seventh year of the mission of Mohammed, the Hashimites, including the Prophet and his family, retired into the quarter of Abu Talib; and with them followed also the descendants of Al-Muttalib, the brother of Hashim. The ban of separation was put rigorously in force. The Hashimites soon found themselves cut off from their supplies of corn and other necessities of life; and a great scarcity ensued... the failing stock of the Hashimites replenished only by occasional and surreptitious ventures, reduced them to want and distress. The citizens could hear the wailing of the famished children within the Sheb ... among the relatives of the isolated band, were found some who ventured, in spite of threats of the Coreish, to introduce from time to time provisions by stealth at night, into the quarter of Abu Talib. Hakim, grandson of Khuwaylid, used, though the attempt was ".sometimes perilous, to carry supplies to his aunt Khadija

(The Life of Mohammed, London, ١٨٧٧)

D. S. Margoliouth

A process known to the pagan Arabs was excommunication; a purpose for which special confederacies were established. Rolls would seem to have been in common use at this time in Mecca; a solemn league and covenant was made, written on a

roll, and suspended in the Kaaba, by which the heads of the Meccan households pledged themselves to exclude the Bani Hashim and the Bani Muttalib from these rights, until, we may presume, Mohammed was declared outlawed, and handed up to .vengeance

(Mohammed and the Rise of Islam, London, ١٩٣١)

The total number of the members of the two clans of Hashim and al-Muttalib, and their clients and slaves who left their homes in Makka to seek sanctuary in the mountain hideout, was four hundred. Once they "settled" in their hideout, and surveyed the landforms around them, they could see that they were confronted with a challenge of superlative complexity and magnitude. Whereas in the past they had to contend only with the hostility of man, now they had to contend with the hostility of nature also. They also noted that their new abode didn't come equipped with what might be called a viable life-support system. They, therefore, realized from the very first day that it would take all their grit, skill, resourcefulness and resolution to adapt themselves to the new surroundings. They knew that their survival would hinge upon their ability to come to terms with an environment which could not be more .forbidding

Khadija was born in an aristocratic family, and was bred in the lap of luxury. She was, therefore, an absolute stranger to a life of austerity and privation. But when, in an exigency, she was called upon to abandon her spacious residence in the city to go into, and

to live in a flinty ravine, she did so willingly and cheerfully. The ravine was so desolate that it shrivelled up the soul of an observer at first glance but she didn't show any sign of consternation upon entering it. As inhospitable as the new surroundings were, she rapidly adjusted to them. She focused on the ordeal ahead, gathering her strength, .her courage and her resources. The resilience of her spirit was truly astonishing

At the beginning of the siege, Ali was sixteen years old. He was charged with the difficult and the dangerous duty of victualling the two clans. He discharged this duty at great risk to his life, and brought water and grain whenever he could find any. For one goatskin of water, he had to pay one piece of gold, and he considered himself lucky if he succeeded in bringing it to the ravine. His efforts, however, brought only partial .relief to the beleaguered clans

Abu Talib himself didn't sleep at nights. For him the physical safety of Muhammad took precedence over every other duty. When Muhammad fell asleep, Abu Talib lifted him, and put him in the bed of one of his four sons, and ordered his son to sleep in his (Muhammad's) bed. A little later, he lifted his nephew again, and put him in the bed of another of his sons. He spent the whole night lifting Muhammad out of one bed and putting him in another. He had no illusions about his enemies; he knew

that they were tenacious, treacherous, vicious and vindictive. He, therefore, did not make the mistake of underestimating them. If one of them crept into the ravine with the intention of killing Muhammad, he would most probably, kill one of the sons of Abu Talib, taking him for the Prophet. Abu Talib and his wife were ever ready to sacrifice their children for Muhammad. In fact, they would have been very happy to sacrifice their own lives for him, if it were necessary. Not only they themselves protected him; .they also made every adult in the ravine responsible for his safety

There were times when Ali, notwithstanding all his daring and resourcefulness, was unable to find any provisions; or if he found any, he could not bring it into the ravine, being unable to circumvent Qurayshi vigilance. On such occasions the children (and the adults) had to go thirsty and hungry. But going thirsty and hungry was a norm in the ravine. When water was available, mothers boiled leaves and bark of trees in it to comfort children crying from hunger. The cry of hungry children could be heard outside the ravine, and the Quraysh responded to it with derisive laughter. They gloated over their "triumph" in making the children of Bani Hashim cry for water and .food

!The Quraysh were determined to make the blockade effective

The most precious gift for the besieged clans during these three years, was water. They and their clients and slaves received it from Khadija. She gave Ali

the pieces of gold with which he bought water. Her concern for those around her manifested itself in many ways. She sought audience from Allah to invoke His mercy upon them. Prayer was a vital activity for her, and it was her "strategy" for handling .adversity. She soon found out that it was a simple but effective strategy

Prayer enabled Khadija to meet the inevitable challenges she encountered during the siege almost every day, and she surmounted them. She was the guardian-angel of the tribe, and everyone in it felt the positive character of her presence, and the .support and the power of her vibrant spirit

O ye who believe! Seek help with patient perseverance and prayer: for Allah is with (those who patiently persevere. (Chapter ٢; verse ١٥٣

Khadija sought the help of Allah with patient perseverance and prayer. When she prayed, she found not only help but also courage, strength, peace, tranquillity and .satisfaction

Those who believe, and whose hearts find satisfaction in the remembrance of Allah; .for without doubt in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find satisfaction

For those who believe and work righteousness, is (every) blessedness, and a beautiful (place of (final) return. (Chapter ١٣; verses ٢٨, ٢٩

:A. Yusuf Ali has explained "blessedness" as follows

Blessedness: an internal state of satisfaction, an inward joy which reflects itself in" the life of a good person, through good and ill fortune. And then, there is always the final goal to which his or her eyes are turned, the beautiful Home of

".rest in the Hereafter, after this life's struggles are over. The goal is Allah Himself

In the remembrance of Allah, Khadija, His devout slave, found satisfaction and .blessedness

Occasionally, the few friends that the members of Bani Hashim had in Makka, tried to .smuggle food into the ravine, but if the pagans caught them, they seized it

One of the friends of Bani Hashim in Makka was Hisham bin Amr al-Aamiri. He brought food and water for them as often as he could. He knew that bringing provisions to the ravine had to be a covert operation - discreet, precise, and nonviolent. Therefore, the time he had chosen to deliver food and water to the besieged, was a few hours before daybreak. But a time came when the infidels caught him, and threatened to kill him if .he persisted in bringing his loaded camels to the ravine for the Bani Hashim

Another friend of the Bani Hashim in Makka was Hakim bin Hizam, the nephew of Khadija. He and a friend of his, Abul Bukhtari, brought essential supplies to the Bani Hashim. Once both of them were driving a camel loaded with food, water and clothing to the ravine when Abu Jahl surprised them, and told them that he was going to confiscate the camel and the provisions. At first, Abul Bukhtari tried to conciliate him but he didn't want to hear anything. He barred their access to the ravine, and refused to let them pass. Abu Bukhtari tried to force his way past

him. This led to a violent fist fight between them. Brawls like this erupted very frequently near the ravine but the friends of Bani Hashim in Makka did not lose heart, .and did everything they could to bring succor to it

Hisham bin Amr al-Aamiri, Hakim bin Hizam, and Abul Bukhtari, were not Muslims but they did not want to see any child or even a slave of Bani Hashim perish from hunger or thirst, and they risked their own lives time and again in carrying victuals to the Shi'b Abu Talib. They were also very happy to pay the bill for such relief operations for .three years, and all they sought in return was the safety of the besieged clans

It should be pointed out here that on this particular occasion, the anger and the hatred of the Umayyad clan of the Quraysh was directed, not against the Muslims, but against the clan of Bani Hashim. Their aim was to destroy Islam. But they could not destroy Islam without killing Muhammad. They made repeated attempts to kill him but they failed because they could not reach him. He was safe and comfortable .behind the "shield" of his clan - the Bani Hashim

As noted before, the Umayyads rightly pinpointed Abu Talib, the chief of Bani Hashim, as responsible for all their failures in their insensate war against Allah and His Messenger, Muhammad. They never condoned him for the part he played in the .struggle

As for the Muslims who did not belong to

the clan of Bani Hashim, there were many, and they were all living in the city. Some among them are touted to have been influential, powerful and rich, and all of them claimed that they loved their Prophet. But curiously, no one among them ever came to see him much less to bring any aid to him. They enjoyed the comfort and security of their homes for three years while their Prophet, Muhammad Mustafa, lived, with his loved ones, teetering, as it were, on the edge of a sword, surrounded by enemies who .were thirsting for his and their blood

It might appear that Khadija's little family, consisting of her husband, Muhammad Mustafa; her little daughter, Fatima Zahra; and her adopted son, Ali ibn Abi Talib, lived, throughout the siege, like the rest of the clan, in a state of non-stop and unmitigated suspense, never knowing what terrors the next day or the night might bring for it. Every day was crammed with perils. But she was never at a loss to find new reserves, in her own Faith and Character, to strengthen it as an entity. She discovered that there was nothing that she wanted more than feeling and being close .to Allah. By feeling and being close to Allah, she was able to banish suspense

For Khadija, the source of the greatest anxiety was the hunger and thirst of the children. Whenever Ali or Hakim bin Hizam or Hisham bin Amr brought provisions into the ravine, she took charge of

them. The children gathered around her, and she gave them food and water. They looked at her with delight and wonder. She put their needs ahead of the needs of their parents, and she put the needs of the parents ahead of her own needs. She had a flair .for extending the family outward to the whole tribe

Those who wish for the (things of) the hereafter, and strive therefore with all due striving and have faith, - they are the ones whose striving is acceptable (to Allah). ((Chapter ١٧; verse ١٩

The safety and security of the clans in the ravine were threatened not only by the Umayyads, and not only by the specters of hunger and thirst but also by excessive heat and excessive cold. In the long days of summer, the sky spewed forth flames onto the earth, and the cliffs and the rocks of the ravine bounced them back, making it a furnace. Khadija gave water to the thirsty as often as she could. In winter, the long nights became intolerably cold. Mothers made most desperate efforts to protect their .children from the ravages of cold. Khadija distributed clothes and firewood to them

The long siege had inevitably disrupted the rhythm of life of all members of the clans of Hashim and al-Muttalib. Every day brought a grim ordeal or a new menace to them. But they were never dismayed by them. In fact, they were happy. The presence of Muhammad, the beloved of Allah, in their midst

was enough to make them forget all their anxieties, and to keep them happy. They knew that Allah had chosen them to defend Muhammad, His messenger, from his enemies. It was an honor they would not barter even for an empire. Khadija inspired them with her example. The majesty and power of her Faith gave them momentum, .and they rode through the storms of the years in exile with dignity and aplomb

Khadija was buoyant from the beginning of the siege to its end. The spirit of Truth and Benevolence was the invisible magic of her personality. She knew that the tribe was under the protection of Allah, and was, therefore, safe. The secret of her serenity is to :be found in the following verses of Quran Majid

.Whosoever follows My guidance, on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve .١

(Chapter ٢; verse ٣٨)

.Behold! Verily on the friends of Allah there is no fear, nor shall they grieve .٢

(Chapter ١٠; verse ۶٢)

Verily those who say, "our Lord is Allah," and remain firm (on that way), - on them .٣ .shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve

(Chapter ۴۶; verse ١٣)

Translator's Note

The devotion and service to Allah result in the soul being made free from all fear and sorrow, as regards the past, present and the future, if we may take an analogy from the Time for a timeless state. Such devotion and service are shown by (١) believing in ,the Signs of Allah, which means understanding and accepting His Will

and (۲) by merging our will completely in His universal Will, which means being in tune with the Infinite, and acting in all things to further His Kingdom. (A. Yusuf Ali)

On Khadija there was no fear and no sorrow. She exemplified God's Message in her workaday life!

Khadija's faith, kindness and charity were well-known to everyone. What no one had seen until she began to live as an exile, was her patience under suffering, and her will-to-fight. She endured suffering like a stoic, and she fought against despair and despondency, and she defeated them. Intertwined in the texture of her life was hope. Hope would seem dramatically out of context in the surroundings in which Khadija was living. But not for her. Her hope was invincible, and it was contagious. She buoyed up the sinking hearts.

They glory in the grace and the bounty from Allah, and in the fact that Allah suffereth not the reward of the faithful to be lost (in the least). (Chapter ۳; verse ۱۷۱)

Khadija gloried in the Grace and Bounty from Allah. She was blessed with them abundantly.

Foregoing is a rough outline, pieced together from various sources, of the story of Muhammad Mustafa and Khadija, and the Bani Hashim and Bani al-Muttalib, when they were in a state of siege in the Shi'b Abu Talib from ۶۱۶ to ۶۱۹. Many important details are missing. But it is hoped that research by dedicated historians and scholars will uncover new facts. These new facts will enable the future

historian(s) of Islam to present a more complete and coherent story of the years when Islam was in a state of siege!

The siege of Bani Hashim and Bani al-Muttalib lasted until A.D. ۶۱۹. In that year the clans returned to the city. Their siege by the Quraysh had failed to produce the intended result. The members of the Bani Hashim were defiant as ever, and their morale was high. It was just as unthinkable for them, at the end of the siege, as it had been at the beginning, to surrender Muhammad - their darling - to his enemies.

If Abu Jahl and the Umayyads abandoned the siege, it was not because of any "change of heart" on their part; they were infidels unreconstructed with a commitment to destroy Islam. They tried to prolong the blockade, and to compass the ruin of Bani Hashim. But they were compelled to abandon the siege because there were other forces at work against it. Following is the account given in the earliest extant authority, the biography of the Prophet by Muhammad ibn Ishaq, of the events which culminated in the return to Makka of the clans of Bani Hashim and Bani al-Muttalib from the Shi'b Abu Talib, after three years of exile:

Quote:

The Annulling of the Boycott of the Bani Hashim

The Bani Hashim and the Bani al-Muttalib were in the Shi'b (=mountain hideout) as the Quraysh had made a covenant to ostracize them. Then some members of the Quraysh itself took steps to challenge that

covenant. None tried harder in this matter than HISHAM BIN AMR because he was the son of a brother of Nadla b. Hashim b. Abd Manaf on the side of his mother, and was closely attached to the Bani Hashim. He was highly esteemed by his people. When these two clans were in the Shi'b, he used to bring a camel laden with food by night, and then when he arrived at the mouth of the alley, he took off its halter, gave it a whack on the side, and sent it running into the alley to them. He did the same thing .another time, bringing clothes to them

Hisham went to see his friend, ZUHAYR B. ABU UMAYYA B. AL-MUGHIRA whose mother was Atika, the daughter of Abdul Muttalib, and said: "Are you content to eat food and wear good clothes while you know the condition in which your uncles are .living? They cannot buy or sell or intermarry

By God, if they were the uncles of Abu'۱-Hakam b. Hisham (Abu Jahl), and you asked ".him to do what he has asked you to do, he would never do it

He (Zuhayr) said: "Confound you, Hisham, what can I do? I am only one man. By God if I had another man to back me, I would soon annul it." He said: "I have found a man for you - myself." "Find another," said Zuhayr. So Hisham went to AL-MUTIM B. ADIY, and said to him: "Are you content that the two

clans of Bani Abd Manaf should perish while you look on consenting to follow the Quraysh? You will find that they will soon do the same with you." He (Mutim) gave the .same answer as Zuhayr had, and demanded a fourth man

Hisham then went to ABU'L BUKHTARI B. HISHAM, and he asked for a fifth man, and then to ZAMA'A B. AL-ASWAD B. AL-MUTTALIB B. ASAD, and reminded him of their kinship and duties. He asked whether others were willing to cooperate in this task, and he gave him the names of the others. They all said that they would meet at night near Hujun above Makka, and when they did, they agreed to consider the matter of .the document, and to secure its annulment

On the following day, when people got together, Zuhayr put on a robe, and made the .seven circuits of the Kaaba

Then he faced the crowd, and said: "O people of Makka, are we to eat and dress while the Bani Hashim perish, unable to buy or to sell? By God, I shall not rest until this evil ".boycotting document is destroyed

".Abu Jahl shouted: "You are wrong. It shall never be destroyed

Zama'a shouted back at him: "You are the one who is wrong. This document of iniquity ".will be destroyed. We didn't want it even when it was first drafted and signed

Abu'l Bukhtari said: "Zama'a is right. We did not like this document when it was ".written, and we do not like it now

Al-Mutim added: Both Zuhayr

and Zama'a are right, and anyone who says otherwise, is wrong. We make Allah our Witness that we dissociate ourselves from the whole idea, and what is written in the .document. Hisham also spoke, and he supported his friends

Then AI-Mutim went up to the document to take it down and to tear it into pieces. He found that worms had eaten most of it except the words: "In Thy Name O Allah." This was the customary formula of the Quraysh to begin their writing. The writer of the .document was Mansur b. Ikrima

.Unquote

AL-MUTIM BIN ADIY tore the infamous document of the Quraysh into pieces. Those pieces were blown away by the wind, and no vestige was left of them. It was an act that called for conviction and courage - conviction that the Bani Hashim were the innocent victims of iniquity; and courage to defy the Quraysh. His resolute action was the signal that the siege of the Bani Hashim was over, and that its members could now return to the city. Mutim himself and the young warriors of his clan rode in full battle-dress to the ravine, and escorted Muhammad Mustafa, Khadija, and all members of the two clans of Bani Hashim and Bani al-Muttalib, back into Makka, and .into their homes

Dr. Muhammad Hamidullah writes on page ١٠ of his book, Introduction to Islam, published by the International Islamic Federation of Student Organizations, Salimiah, :(Kuwait (١٩٧٧

After three years, four or five non-Muslims, more humane than the rest, and" belonging

".to different clans, proclaimed publicly their denunciation of the unjust boycott

Dr. Hamidullah has attributed the failure of the boycott to the humanity of "four or five non-Muslims." They were, he says, "more humane than the rest." He is right. They were more humane than the rest of the non-Muslims in Makka. But were they more ?humane even than the Muslims who were living in Makka

Astoundingly, incredibly, history's answer to this uncomfortable question is in the affirmative. The situation abounds in irony. After all, apart from these five paladins - all non-Muslims -humanity did not impel anyone else in Makka - non-Muslim or !Muslim - to defy the Quraysh, and to act in defence of the Bani Hashim

?There is one more question, viz., why did Zuhayr consider himself alone

When Hisham broached to his friend, Zuhayr, the subject of annulling the Agreement of the pagans to boycott the Bani Hashim, taunted him for being insensitive to their sufferings, and reproached him for his failure to act to bring that suffering to an end; the latter said: "Confound you, Hisham, what can I do? I am but one man. By God, if I ".had another man to back me, I would soon annul it

Zuhayr's answer is cryptic. Why did he consider himself a minority of one? Didn't he know that there were many Muslims in Makka? Why didn't he try to enlist their support to bring the siege of Bani Hashim to an end? He ought to have solicited their support. Even if

.they had withheld it, it would not have done any harm to anyone

According to the historians, some of the Muslims in Makka, were men of rank and substance, and had considerable clout with the Quraysh. But for some mysterious reason, it did not occur either to Zuhayr himself or to any of his friends, to mobilize them (the Muslims). They decided to ignore the Muslims. They went ahead, and took .unilateral action to bring the siege of Bani Hashim to an end

Zuhayr and his friends were successful in their efforts to bring the Bani Hashim back into the city. Muhammad Mustafa, Khadija, Ali, Abu Talib and all other members of the Bani Hashim and Bani al-Muttalib, returned to their homes. But by their action, Zuhayr and his companions had demonstrated that the Muslims living in Makka, were not ."indispensable" for Muhammad and/or for Islam

It is one of the supreme paradoxes of the history of Islam that the hand that reached out to the wall of the Kaaba; took down the covenant of the Quraysh to ostracize the Bani Hashim; and tore it into shreds, belonged, not to a "believer," but to an "unbeliever," - Mutim ibn Adiy! Neither Mutim nor any of his four friends, viz., Hisham bin Amr, Zuhayr ibn Abu Umayya, Abu'l Bukhtari bin Hisham and Zama'a bin al-Aswad, was a Muslim. But all five of them were high-minded paladins, who did not acquiesce in the injustice being done to the Bani Hashim. They did not rest until

.they had restored justice in Makka

Technically, these five paladins were not Muslims as noted above. But they and they alone had the grit and the gumption to uphold a principle that is Islamic, viz., the Principle of Justice. They upheld justice, and by their heroic deed, won immortality for .themselves in the saga of Islam

The Muslims, on the other hand, not only did not act; they did not even protest against the cynicism and the highhandedness of the Quraysh. They maintained, for three years, a discreet detachment and an unconvincing silence. They were all men of prudence. Therefore, all that they did, was to temporize, and to watch the drift of .events

The siege of the Bani Hashim lasted for more than a thousand days. What is most amazing in the epic of that siege, is that the "monolith" of the clans of Hashim and al-Muttalib did not show any "cracks" in it even though it was subject to non-stop stress and tension from the beginning to the end. The Quraysh could not find any traitor in the clans, not even a slave who was willing to betray his masters; nor could they find .any sign of faintheartedness, not even in a child

There were four hundred men, women and children in the Shi'b Abu Talib. They were sharing with Muhammad and Khadija the experience of living in exile, and no one out of them ever became a "deserter," either to save his life, or to gratify the pangs of hunger and

thirst, or to escape from the extremes of heat and cold, or to escape from confinement without end. They had no way of knowing how and when, if ever, the siege would end, and if they would ever return to their homes. Days in exile passed into weeks; weeks into months; and months into years. There was absolutely nothing to sustain hope. And yet hope was one thing that sustained them from beginning to .end

It appears that the collective but unspoken resolution of the heroic "Four Hundred" was to "sink or swim" - with Muhammad. They would rather be "prisoners" with Muhammad than be free citizens without him. For them, life without Muhammad was .not worth living at all

Abu Talib and the other members of the Bani Hashim and Bani al-Muttalib considered the siege a "test" of their love for Muhammad. The siege was also a test of their morale, their physical courage and their moral courage, their steadfastness, their perseverance, their patience under suffering, and their strength. They passed in each of these tests. Allah had entrusted the personal safety of Muhammad Mustafa - His Messenger - to them. They had a commitment to protect him, and they brought glory .and honor to their commitment

In three years of exile, Khadija's vast fortune ran out. She had spent most of it on buying water. She was happy that her wealth was the means through which Allah had saved the most precious lives in all Creation - the lives of Muhammad

Mustafa and his Ahlul-Bayt - and she was grateful to Him for bestowing this honor .upon her

In the midst of convulsions and upheaval all around her, Khadija's faith remained a constant, and it remained a source of unfailing strength to her and to those around .her. Her faith was sustained by prayer, as noted before

Khadija's faith was something almost "visible" and "tangible." She was constantly in touch with Allah - the Source of Faith -through prayer. Prayer was also the secret of her quiet courage. Her tranquil manner and her serene presence, didn't let the morale of the tribe languish at any time during the siege. She was an "anchor" for the whole .tribe in all the years of turbulence and tribulation

The failure of the siege of Bani Hashim and Bani al-Muttalib by the pagans of Makka, and the return of the two clans to their homes, was a watershed in the history of .Islam. It was proof of the resilience and strength of the new creed

At the beginning of the siege, the pagans had felt confident that they had at last "cornered" Islam, and that it was at their mercy. Their efforts to obliterate Islam were not half-hearted or sporadic, and they had left nothing to chance. They dangled the specter of starvation before the besieged clans. They had assumed that in the face of the two scourges of constant hunger and thirst, and a constant state of subjective ,alarm, the resistance of the besieged clans would break down

.(and they would be compelled to surrender Muhammad to them (to the pagans

Without a doubt, human endurance has its limits, and interminable hunger and thirst can break a man's spirit, no matter how heroic he may be. But the pagans didn't know that the Faith of the Bani Hashim in Allah, and their loyalty to Muhammad, were stronger than the fear of hunger-and-thirst, and were, in fact, stronger than the fear of death itself.

.The members of the clan of Bani Hashim had no fear of death

When Muhammad Mustafa planted the Banner of Tawhid and lighted the Lamp of Faith in Arabia, he was at once challenged by the champions of the idols. The idol-worshippers hated to see the Banner of Tawhid fluttering on the horizon, and they sent their serried legions to eradicate it. But those legions found the Banner surrounded and protected by the children of Bani Hashim. The latter had rallied around it to protect it; and to protect it they had to defy death every moment! The legions made fierce and repeated charges upon the Banner but were repulsed each time. The children of Bani Hashim defeated and routed the Legions of Misbelief.

The Lamp of Faith lighted by Muhammad Mustafa was threatened by the hurricanes of paganism and polytheism. But the children of Bani Hashim successfully defended that Lamp. The hurricanes spent all their force and fury to put it out and failed.

In defending the Banner of Tawhid and the Lamp of Faith, many children of Bani

Hashim were killed. But as noted above, death held no terrors for them. Tawhid and Faith were far more precious to them than their own lives. They were proud of dying in defence of Tawhid and Faith. They believed that both the Banner and the Lamp were their most precious heritage, and it was their sacred duty to protect them, and .they did

Abu Jahl and the Umayyads made countless attempts to extinguish the Flame of Islam. But they were unsuccessful. The Flame of Islam burned ever brighter. How could they extinguish it when it had both visible and Invisible protectors? If Bani Hashim were the visible protectors of the Flame of Islam, Allah was its Invisible :Protector, as we read in the following verses of Quran Majid

Fain would they extinguish the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah will not allow .(but that His light should be perfected, even though the unbelievers may detest (it

It is He who has sent His apostle with guidance and the religion of truth, to proclaim it .(over all religion, even though the pagans may detest (it

(Chapter ۹; verses ۳۲, ۳۳)

Chapter ۱۲: The Death

The five paladins of Makka had trampled upon the covenant of the Quraysh to boycott the Bani Hashim. Thanks to their chivalry and gallantry, the Bani Hashim could return to the city, and live in their homes once again. But they had barely begun to recover from the rigors of living in a mountain hideout for three years, when Khadija, ,the wife

the companion and the friend of Muhammad Mustafa, the Messenger of Allah; and the benefactress of Islam and the Muslims, fell ill. Her illness was brief but fatal. All her life she had lived in the midst of abundance and luxury but the three years of exile had been a time of excessive austerity for her which inevitably took its toll.

As noted before, Khadija was the first woman to declare that the Creator was One, and that Muhammad was His Messenger. The glory and honor of being the First Believer in the whole world, is hers to all eternity.

When Islam came under mounting pressure from its enemies, Khadija sacrificed her comfort, her wealth and her home for it; and now it would appear that she sacrificed her life also. Without a doubt, if she had lived in her palatial house in Makka, surrounded by her maid-servants, she might have lived for many more years. But she preferred to stand by her husband and his clan, and to share the bitters of life with them. During the siege, she had to endure not only the pangs of hunger and thirst but also the extremes of heat in summer and cold in winter; yet she never complained to her husband about them. Whether times were good or bad, whether she had plenty or she had nothing, she was always cheerful. Austerity and privation never soured her. It was this temperament that was an unfailing source of comfort, courage and strength for her

.husband during the bleakest moments of his life

During the years of the siege, Khadija spent all her fortune on buying essentials like food and water for the clan of her husband. When she returned to her house, her last cent was gone; and when she died, there was not enough money available in the house even to buy a shroud. A cloak of her husband was used as a shroud for her, and .she was given burial in it

Muhammad Mustafa never took another wife as long as Khadija lived, and if she had .not died, it is most probable that he would never have married any other woman

Edward Gibbon

During the ۲۴-years of their marriage, Khadija's youthful husband abstained from the right of polygamy, and the pride or tenderness of the venerable matron was never insulted by the society of a rival. After her death, the Prophet placed her in the rank of four perfect women, with the sister (sic) of Moses, the mother of Jesus, and Fatima, .(the best beloved of his daughters (sic

(The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire)

Muhammad ibn Ishaq, the biographer of the Prophet, says that when there was resumption of Divine revelation, after its cessation following the first two visits of Gabriel, Khadija received a tribute and a salutation of peace from Allah Ta'ala. The message was communicated to Muhammad by Gabriel, and when he conveyed it to Khadija, she said: "Allah is Peace (as-Salam), and from Him is all Peace, and may peace be

".on Gabriel

Muhammad forever remembered Khadija with affection, gratitude and love. During her illness, he kept a nightlong vigil nursing her, comforting her and praying for her. He told her that Allah had promised Eternal Bliss to her, and had built for her a palace of pearls in Paradise. Toward morning her frail frame could not endure the attack of fever any more and her sanctified and noble soul left this earth for its destination in Heaven where it entered the company of the immortals. Her death filled .Muhammad's heart with sorrow

.Khadija died on the tenth of Ramadan of the tenth year of the Proclamation of Islam

Khadija was buried in Hujun above Makka. Muhammad Mustafa, the Messenger of Allah, himself descended into her grave to lie in it for a few moments. Then he assisted the other mourners in lowering the body into it. After the burial, he smoothed .the earth on her grave

.Thus died Khadija, the first woman to believe in the Oneness of the Creator

.Peace on Khadija to whom Allah Ta'ala sent His greetings and salutations

.Peace on Khadija for whom Allah Ta'ala built a palace of pearls in Paradise

.Peace on Khadija, the best of women, and the chief of all women

Khadija died in ۶۱۹. One month after her death, Muhammad Mustafa had to sustain another shock in the death of Abu Talib, his uncle and guardian, and the bulwark of Islam. The death of these two friends – Khadija and Abu Talib – was the greatest shock that the

Apostle of God had to endure in the fifty years of his life. The two lamps of his life were extinguished. He was overwhelmed with sorrow. He called the year of their ".death "the Year of Sorrow

The year ۶۱۹ turned out to be a year of sorrow for Muhammad Mustafa in more than one sense. The death of one's loved ones is naturally an occasion for sorrow. But in the case of Muhammad, the death of these two friends was not merely a subjective experience for him. He was soon made conscious of the meaning of their death by a .series of extraneous events

Muhammad ibn Ishaq

Khadija and Abu Talib died in the same year, and with Khadija's death troubles came fast one after another. She had been a faithful supporter for him in Islam, and he used to tell her of his troubles. With the death of Abu Talib he lost a source of strength in his personal life and a defence and protection against his tribe. Abu Talib died three years before he (Muhammad) migrated to Medina, and it was then that Quraysh began to treat him in an offensive way which they did not dare to follow in his uncle's lifetime. A .young lout actually threw dust on his head

Hisham on the authority of his father, Urwa, told me that the Prophet went into his house, and he was saying: "Quraysh never treated me like this when Abu Talib was ".alive

(The Life of the Messenger of Allah)

Washington Irving

Mohammed

soon became sensible of the loss he had sustained in the death of Abu Talib who had been not merely an affectionate relative, but a steadfast and powerful protector, from his great influence in Mecca. At his death there was no one to check and .counteract the hostilities of Abu Sofian and Abu Jahl

The fortunes of Mohammed were becoming darker and darker in his native place. Khadija, his original benefactress, the devoted companion of his solitude and seclusion, the zealous believer in his doctrine, was dead; so also was Abu Talib, once his faithful and efficient protector. Deprived of the sheltering influence of the latter, Mohammed had become, in a manner, an outlaw in Mecca, obliged to conceal himself and remain a burden on the hospitality of those whom his own doctrines had involved in persecution (sic). If worldly advantage had been his objective, how had it been ?attained

(The Life of Mohammed)

Washington Irving has erred in stating that Muhammad had become "a burden on the hospitality of those whom his own doctrines had involved in persecution." Muhammad was never a burden to anyone at any time. The members of his clan - the Bani Hashim - considered it an honor and a privilege to defend him and to protect Islam - both of them their greatest treasures. They were aware that with Muhammad in their midst, they had become the recipients of the blessings of Heaven, and they had no intention .of forfeiting those blessings at any price

Who else but

the clan of Bani Hashim would defend Muhammad and protect Islam? Muhammad .was its flesh and its blood, and Islam was its life and its love

Another error that the distinguished historian has made is in the question which he has posed: "If worldly advantage had been his (Muhammad's) objective, how had it "?been attained

Attaining worldly advantage was not Muhammad's objective. The Quraysh had offered him all the worldly advantages; they offered him wealth, kingdom and beauty. They were all his for the asking. But he kicked at them. Could they offer him anything ?else

Muhammad had only one objective and that was to carry out the duty imposed upon .him by Allah Ta'ala, namely, to promulgate Islam - the Religion of Allah

Sir William Muir

The sacrifices to which Abu Talib exposed himself and his family for the sake of his nephew, while yet incredulous of his mission (sic), stamp his character as singularly noble and unselfish. They afford at the same time strong proof of the sincerity of Mohammed. Abu Talib would not have acted thus for an interested deceiver; and he .had ample means of scrutiny

(The Life of Mohammed, London, ١٨٧٧)

:Sir William Muir further says in this connection

If indeed, it had not been for the influence and steadfast protection of Abu Talib, it is" clear that the hostile intentions of the Coreish would have imperilled the liberty, ".perhaps the life, of Mohammed

(The Life of Mohammed, London, ١٨٧٧)

Jurji Zaydan

The reason why Abdul Muttalib made Abu Talib the guardian of Muhammad, was that

Abu Talib and Abdullah were the children of the same mother. Without a doubt, the protection of Abu Talib was the major cause not only of the success of Muhammad's mission but also of his physical survival. Abu Talib was a dignitary of Quraysh, and a ...man of great prestige. Muhammad lived in his house like one of his children

(Complete Works, published by Dar-ul-Jeel, Beirut, Lebanon, Volume I, page ۹۱. ۱۹۸۱)

Lt. General Sir John Glubb writes in his book, The Life and Times of Mohammed, that Abu Talib is not considered a hero by Muslims because he died in unbelief. But he adds, "Nevertheless, if it had not been for the staunch courage with which he stood by ".his nephew, Islam might have died in its cradle

Both Sir William Muir and Sir John Glubb and many other historians have insinuated that Abu Talib died in unbelief. If challenged to prove this, they would advert to an authority like Imam Bukhari. Bukhari says in one of the "traditions" that he has collected that when Abu Talib was on his deathbed, the Apostle urged him to become .a Muslim but he said that doing so would embarrass him with his Qurayshi friends

The authors of this "tradition" forgot one thing. Abu Talib was dying, and knew that he was not going to see his Qurayshi "friends" any more. He knew that he was going into the presence of his Creator. At a time like this he could not have cared less for the

Quraysh. His anxiety at all times was to win the pleasure of Allah. He proved by his deeds more than anyone else could ever prove by his words that his faith in the Oneness of God and in the mission of Muhammad as His messenger, was rocklike and .unshakable

Amin Dawidar, the modern Egyptian historian, says that Abu Talib was like a fortress for Muhammad which sheltered him from all the heat and cold and the contrariness and cussedness of the world outside. "And when Abu Talib died," he says, "Muhammad found himself face to face with the enemy for the first time in his life. ".Without a doubt, the death of Abu Talib was a great tragedy for him

Abu Talib could not but be a Muslim and a Momin. No man can love Muhammad and idolatry at the same time; the two loves are mutually exclusive. And no man can love Muhammad yet hate Islam. The love of Muhammad and the hatred of Islam cannot coexist. Whoever loves Muhammad, must inevitably love Islam. If there is any one thing beyond any doubt in the history of Islam, it is the love of Abu Talib for Muhammad. As noted before, Abu Talib and his wife, loved Muhammad more than they loved their own children. Such love could have had only one fountainhead, .namely, their conviction that Islam was divine in its origins

Abu Talib was proud that Allah had chosen Muhammad, the son of his brother Abdullah, in all creation, to be

His last and greatest messenger to mankind. Muhammad was the greatest love and .the greatest pride of his uncle, Abu Talib

In His Book, Allah Ta'ala identified the protection that Abu Talib gave to Muhammad :Mustafa, as His Own protection as per the following verse

(Did He not find thee an orphan and give thee shelter (and care)? (Chapter ۹۳; verse ۶

Allah Ta'ala gave shelter (protection) and care to His Messenger, Muhammad .Mustafa, through His slave - Abu Talib

Abu Talib worked in Makka for the glory and power of Islam, and he was the guardian of its absolute and incontestable values. For ten years, he steered the "vessel" of Islam through dark and turbulent seas with a skill, vision and faith that became the dismay of the guardians of the idols of the pagans of Arabia. His deeds are an integral part of the story of Islam, and they are also the most eloquent testimony of his faith in !Allah and His Messenger - in Islam

May Allah bless His loving slaves, Khadija and Abu Talib. Both of them put obedience .to Him ahead of everything else in life

Chapter ۱۳: The Mother of Believers

Before Islam, Khadija was the Princess of Makka. When the sun of Islam rose above the horizon, Allah was pleased to make her the Princess of Islam also. Allah was also :pleased to make her the Mother of the Believers, as He says in His Book

The prophet is closer to the believers than their own selves, and his wives are their .mothers

(Chapter ٣٣; verse ۶)

Translator's Note

This Sura (chapter ٣٣) establishes the dignity and position of the Holy Prophet's" wives, who had a special mission and responsibility as Mothers of the Believers. They were not to be like ordinary women: they had to instruct women in spiritual matters, visit and minister to those who were ill or in distress, and do other kindly offices in aid (of the Prophet's mission." (A. Yusuf Ali

The title of the Mother of Believers appears to have been specifically designed for Khadija. Without Khadija, this title becomes meaningless. She and she alone gave the sacred love which a mother alone can give, to the believers. A mother may be hungry but if her children are hungry, she will feed them first. In fact, if necessary - in an exigency - she will feed her children her own share of food and will gladly go hungry. This has happened on countless occasions in history, especially during wars and famines. The fact that her children are well-fed and contented, is enough to make a mother happy and contented, and is enough to make her forget her own hunger and .thirst. A mother's love is unconditional; it is all-protective, all-enveloping

Most of the Muslims of Makka were poor. They had no source of income, and they had no means of making a living in a city the economic life of which was controlled by a cartel of idolaters. The members of the cartel had decreed that no one would pay

a Muslim any wages for any work done by him, and no one would buy anything from him. They knew that material privation affected the body as well as the spirit, and they figured that when the resistance of the Muslims breaks down through economic attrition, they would repudiate Islam, and they would abandon Muhammad. A concurrent aim of this policy was to starve the Muslims. But Khadija fed the poor Muslims, day after day, so that no one among them ever went hungry, and she provided shelter to them. For her, charity was nothing new but the size and scope of the commitment were; she spent money prodigiously on the poor and the homeless .Muslims of Makka, and thus foiled the aims of the cartel

The support that Khadija gave to the Muslim community in Makka, was indispensable for the survival of Islam. Her support to the Muslim community guaranteed its survival when it was in a state of blockade. In this sense, she was a maker of history -the .history of Islam

All wives of Muhammad Mustafa, the Messenger of Allah, are the Mothers of Believers; but between them and Khadija there is a basic difference. All the women he married in Medina, received a stipend from the Bayt-ul-Mal (the Public Treasury). Some of them claimed special prerogatives, and demanded "perks" from him. They said that the stipend paid to them was insufficient for their needs, and they could not .buy enough food to eat from it

Khadija, on the other

hand, never asked her husband for anything. Far from asking him to bring anything for her, she made her own purse a public treasury for the Muslims. In Makka there was no Bayt-ul-Mal, and it was the boundless generosity and the unlimited wealth of Khadija that saved the Community of the Faithful from starving. She was so solicitous of the welfare of the followers of her husband that she didn't withhold even the last .coin that was in her possession, and spent it on them

.May Allah bless His slave, Khadija, the Mother of the Believers, par excellence

Khadija as a Mother

Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal (d. ۱۹۳۸) was the Poet-Philosopher of Indo-Pakistan. He was also a catalyst in the renaissance of the Muslims in the ۲۰th-century. He says that as a creator, a mother ranks next only to God Himself. She brings new life into the world, i.e., she creates; and that act - the act of bringing new life into the world or the act of creating, calls for sacrifice. In bringing new life into the world, a mother risks her own life. She therefore merits the greatest honor and respect. What makes her willing to sacrifice her life is love - the love of her child. Her love for her child is the most sacrosanct love. In sanctity, a mother's love for her child ranks second only to the love .of God Himself

Khadija was the proud mother of three children - two boys and a girl, as noted before. The

two boys - Qasim and Abdullah -were still infants when they died. Her last and the .only surviving child was her daughter, Fatima Zahra

.If Khadija was the ideal mother, Fatima Zahra was the ideal daughter

Fatima Zahra, the ideal daughter of Muhammad Mustafa and Khadija, also became the ideal mother. She was the mother of two boys - Hasan and Husain - and two girls .- Zaynab and Umm Kulthum

Khadija and Fatima Zahra - the mother and daughter - were two of the only four perfect women in the world. Both of them made motherhood sacrosanct. They .brought glory and honor to motherhood

As noted earlier in this book, women had no status in pre-Islamic Arabia. In the male-dominated Arab society they were ruthlessly exploited and were treated like cattle. Muhammad Mustafa, the Messenger of Allah, put an end to their exploitation by men, and gave them a status which they didn't have in any country, at any time. About :mothers, he said

".Paradise is under the feet of one's mother"

This means that no one may entertain the hope of entering paradise if one has displeased one's mother. One's admission to paradise hinges upon one's ability to win .salvation, and no one who has displeased one's mother, will ever win salvation

The Prophet of Islam has thus made the winning of the pleasure of one's mother - a .woman - a condition-precedent for one to win salvation and to enter paradise

Chapter ۱۴: The Perfect Woman

There have been many women in the history of the world who

have become great and famous because of their great deeds. Mankind can justly be .proud of them

But in the entire history of the world, there are only four women who could measure up to the high standards of true greatness and perfection set by Islam. They measured up to these standards by dint of their great services to Allah. Muhammad Mustafa, the Prophet of Islam, the Recipient of Revelation from Heaven, and its :Interpreter, identified them. They are

Asiya, the wife of Pharaoh ۲. Maryam (Mary), the mother of Isa (Jesus) ۳. Khadija, .۱ the daughter of Khuwayled, and ۴. Fatima Zahra, the daughter of Muhammad (Mustafa (S

Muhammad Mustafa found only four perfect women in the entire human race. Out of these four, the last two belong to the same house; they are Khadija, the mother, and .Fatima, her daughter

.Khadija was the image of the perfect soul

In the rest of mankind, the only other women who might qualify as perfect, would be the other wives of Muhammad Mustafa. But he himself gave the verdict in this matter, and his verdict remains irrevocable. He mentioned only Khadija out of all his wives as the perfect woman, and thus excluded - by a fiat -his other wives from the group of .perfect women

Khadija combined in her person all those attributes which add up to perfection. If she had lacked any of those attributes, her husband would not have classified her as perfect. And there is no evidence that she had any of those

.frailties which are said to be characteristic of womanhood as a rule

One of the characteristic weaknesses of women is said to be jealousy. Khadija was untouched by jealousy of any kind. She was a woman who found fulfillment, pleasure and satisfaction in giving. She was a munificent patron of the poor. She was at her very best when she was feeding the hungry and comforting the cheerless. The acts of feeding and comforting the hungry and the cheerless did not call for a conscious .effort on her part; for her they had become a reflex

Just as Khadija was free from jealousy, she was also free from cynicism. One thing she never did, was to hurt anyone. She never made fun of any woman; she never tried to belittle anyone; she never despised anyone; she was never angry and never spiteful; and she was strictly non-judgmental. She never uttered an ugly or a pejorative word against anyone. So true to the dimensions of the understanding heart, she was solicitous of the feelings of even the humblest and the poorest of .women, and she was distressed by the distress of other people

There was a time when Khadija was called the Princess of the Merchants and the Princess of Makka. Then a time came when her great fortune changed hands. From her hands, it passed into the hands of Islam. She was rich and she became poor in the material sense. She exchanged a lifestyle of luxury for a lifestyle of austerity. But

nothing changed in her temperament. She remained cheerful, magnanimous, and idealistic as before. She spent more time than ever in devotions to Allah, and in service to His messenger, and of course, she was never forgetful of the well-being .and welfare of the Community of the Faithful

:The following verse in Quran Majid may be referring to her

And there are some who are, by God's leave, foremost in good deeds; that is the ... (highest grace. (Chapter ۳۵; verse ۳۲

Khadija, the idealist, was foremost in doing "good deeds." She had an air of compelling sanctity about her. Through her "good deeds" she became the recipient of .the "highest graces" from Heaven

Khadija was the ideal woman, the ideal wife for Muhammad Mustafa, the ideal .mother for her children, and the ideal Mother of the Believers

Faith in Allah's mercy was the spring from which Khadija took her life's responses. She was endowed with what Quran Majid has called Qalb Saleem ("the sound heart") in verse ۸۹ of its ۲۶th chapter. Qalb Saleem or the sound heart, has been defined by A. :Yusuf Ali, the translator and commentator of Quran Majid, as follows

A heart that is pure, and unaffected by the diseases that afflict others. As the heart in" Arabic is taken to be not only the seat of feelings and affections, but also of ".intelligence and resulting action, it implies the whole character

.Khadija's symmetry of character was an index of her Qalb Saleem

"Khadija was born with Qalb Saleem or the "sound heart

such as only the chosen ones of Allah are born with. It was a heart brimming with .deep convictions, dedication to Islam, and love for and gratitude to Allah

Chapter ۱۵: Generosity

Khadija, the princess of Arabia, and Muhammad Mustafa were married in A.D. ۵۹۵. Fifteen years later, Muhammad was chosen by Allah to be His messenger. As God's messenger, his duty was to promulgate Islam in the world. From that moment, every thing changed for Khadija. She made her entire fortune an endowment for Islam. That endowment could not have come at a more opportune time for Islam. Khadija told her husband that all her vast wealth was his, and he could spend it just as he .wished

.Khadija's generosity had a glowing spontaneity

Muhammad Mustafa "invested" Khadija's wealth in Islam. There has never been a better "investment" in the entire history of mankind. This "investment" was a guarantee that Islam's march would not be halted or even be retarded because of any lack of material means and support. It was an investment that, to this day, is paying enormous "dividends", and will pay "dividends" for every generation of the .Muslims, to the end of time itself

But material wealth was not the only investment that Khadija made in Islam. She also invested her time, talent, energy, spirit and heart in Islam – an investment otherwise known as commitment. She knew her spouse's dreams and hopes, and she shared .them all with him

Khadija's intent in supporting Islam was so transparent that Allah Ta'ala was

:pleased to call her wealth His Own in the following verse of Quran Majid

(And He found thee in need, and made thee independent. (Chapter ٩٣; verse ٨

Translator's Note

The holy Prophet inherited no wealth and was poor. The true, pure, and sincere love" of Khadija not only raised him above want, but made him independent of worldly needs in his later life, enabling him to devote his whole time to the service of Allah." (A. (Yusuf Ali

.Allah Ta'ala made His slave, Muhammad, rich with the wealth of Khadija

Khadija and the Two Migrations to Abyssinia

Two groups of Muslims left Makka in the years ٦١٥ and ٦١٦ to escape persecution by the Quraysh and they sought sanctuary in Abyssinia. The total number of men and .women in both groups was about one hundred

With a few exceptions like Uthman and Zubayr, the rest of the refugees in these two groups were too poor to bear the expenses of travel to Abyssinia. Who equipped their caravans and paid their expenses so they were able to travel? The historians have not answered this question. But it is most probable that Khadija equipped the caravans and financed the emigration of the Muslims from Makka to Abyssinia. In Makka, she alone had the resources with which to underwrite emigration of Muslims on such a .scale

Chapter ١٦: Khadija and Muhammad

During the first fifteen years of her marriage, Khadija's duties were purely those of a .housewife and a mother

In A.D. ٦١٠ Allah Ta'ala chose Muhammad to be His messenger, and since

then there was an accession of new duties for Khadija. Now besides being her husband, Muhammad had also become her guide and leader in the two worlds – this one and the Hereafter. She was highly conscientious in her duties as a wife and a mother; now she also became conscientious in her duties as a Muslima and a Momina (=True Believer). She was happy that Allah had picked her husband out of all creation to carry the message of Islam to the world, and she threw herself heart, mind, and .soul into his work to make it successful

Khadija's parents, like the parents of Muhammad Mustafa, had died when she was quite young. She was thus deprived, as Muhammad was, of the parental love and tenderness. She and her husband were both orphaned early in life but both were destined to give their love and tenderness to the orphans of the world. What they lost in the love and tenderness of their parents, they gained in the infinite love and mercy .of Allah Ta'ala Himself

When Khadija entered the house of Muhammad as his wife, she didn't show any interest in finery, in cosmetics, in expensive and exotic gifts etc. After her marriage, she had only one overriding interest, and that was to secure the comfort and happiness of her husband. She secured them by applying all her energy and tenacity. She was comfortable only if he was comfortable, and she was happy only if he was happy. His happiness was

.her happiness

She was endowed with that rare genius and that deft hand which made the house of .her husband a heaven on this earth

The role that Khadija played after the Proclamation by her husband, of his mission as the messenger of Allah, was vitally important in the history of Islam. As soon as he stepped out of his house, he put himself in the line of fire. The pagans tormented him with their invectives and they hurt him with their hands. Bristling with difficulties as his work was, rowdy and uncouth neighbors made it even more difficult. But as soon as he entered his house, Khadija greeted him with a smile that routed all his sorrows. .She spoke words of cheer, hope and comfort and all his anxieties and fears vanished

Khadija's smiles and her words acted like a balm upon the wounds which the idolaters inflicted upon Muhammad every day. And every day Khadija revived his spirits and restored his morale. Her cheerfulness "cushioned" for him the devastating pressures of external events, and he was able to face his enemies again with new confidence. The only happiness that he ever found in those years of horror and terror, was when he was with Khadija. Sorrows and tribulations came in waves, one after another, threatening to overwhelm him, but she was always there to rebuild his courage and resolution in overcoming them. She was, for him, a psychological "shield" against the .trauma of the constantly escalating violence of the Quraysh

Khadija had

the same sense of mission as Muhammad had, and she was just as eager as he was to see Islam triumph over paganism. To her eagerness to see the triumph of Islam, she added commitment and power. This she did by freeing her husband from the necessity of making a living. She thus enabled him to focus all his attention, all his physical energy, and all his time to the advancement of Islam. This is a most significant contribution she made to the work of her husband as messenger of God. She was the fulcrum that he needed, in the words of A Yusuf Ali, "all through his years of preparation." The years before the Proclamation of Islam, were his "years of .preparation" for the prophethood

A Yusuf Ali

Days and nights he (Muhammad) spent there (in the cave of Hira) with his Lord. Hard were the problems he resolved in his mind, -Harder and more cross-grained than the red granite Of the rock around him, - problems not his own, But his people's, yea, and of human destiny, Of the mercy of God, and the age-old conflict Of evil and .righteousness, sin and abounding Grace

(The Holy Quran - Introduction)

It is probable that Muhammad, the Prophet-Designate, systematized and optimized Islam in the cave of Hira. The lineaments of Islam were clearly and unmistakably visible in his personal life long before he formally proclaimed that he was the "messenger of God. We do not know exactly how long did the "years of preparation

last for him but by the time he was forty years old, the framework of Islam was ready .in his mind

Time was a basic factor in the systematization of Islam, and Khadija was aware of its importance for her husband in his work. She therefore created an optimal environment in which he could take maximum advantage of time, and make it .productive

Khadija was abundantly gifted with empathy. She anticipated the unspoken wishes of her husband, and went ahead and did what he wished to be done. Twenty-five years of married life had produced exact point-to-point correspondence between her and .her husband

In the year ۱۰ of the Proclamation, Khadija died. The death of a loved one shows the vulnerability of mortal love. But the love of Muhammad and Khadija was not mortal; it was immortal. When Khadija died, Muhammad's love for her did not die. In fact, his love for Khadija not only outlived her but actually went on growing even after her death. Not even the presence, in his house, of nine wives, could inhibit the growth of .that love, and his love for her was always struggling to find expression

If Khadija had shown kindness to someone at any time, and even if she had done it only once, Muhammad Mustafa remembered it, and he made it a point to show the .same kindness to that person even after her death, and he did it as often as possible

In Medina, once an old woman came to see Muhammad Mustafa with

some request. He greeted her cordially, showed much solicitude for her welfare, and complied with her request there and then. When she left, Ayesha who was one of his wives, asked him who the old lady was. He said: "When Khadija and I were in Makka, ".this woman came from time to time to see her

In her lifetime, Khadija had shown generosity and kindness to countless people. After her death, Muhammad Mustafa did not forget those people. The recipients of the generosity and the kindness of Khadija, became, after her death, the recipients of the generosity and the kindness of her husband. In this connection, Ayesha is reported as :saying

Whenever a goat or a sheep was slaughtered (in the house), the messenger of Allah ordered its meat to be sent to the ladies who at one time had been friends of Khadija. One day I asked him why did he do so, and he said: "I love all those people who loved ".Khadija

(Isaba, Vol. ۴, p. ۲۸۳)

Allah Ta'ala honored His loving slave, Khadija, and saved her from the anguish of sharing the love of her husband with other women. Throughout the quarter-century of married life, she and she alone was the companion and friend of her husband, Muhammad Mustafa. They lived for each other and they shared the bitters and .sweets of life together

Allah had bestowed many great attributes of character and personality upon His slave, Khadija. As richly blessed as she was with those attributes, she "reinforced" them with

good deeds for Islam. She dressed up those attributes through love of Allah, obedience to her husband, and service to Islam. Through love and service, she rose to .a position which remained unattainable for any other wife of Muhammad Mustafa

After the death of Khadija, many other women entered the house of Muhammad Mustafa as his wives. Some of them did little, if anything, to bring cheer, comfort and peace to him. In fact, they did just the opposite. They took cheer, comfort and peace .away from him, and brought heart-burning to him

Khadija alone made, with her chemistry of character, the house of Muhammad Mustafa, the Messenger of Allah, an "island" of peace, contentment and happiness in .a sea of conflict and strife

It was decreed in Heaven that Muhammad Mustafa should marry the most well-born and the most understanding woman in all Arabia. There did not exist such a woman other than Khadija. Allah had a distinct purpose for her to fulfil. Their marriage, therefore, was made in Heaven. Abbas Mahmud al-Akkad of Egypt says in his book, :Ayesha

It was the special decree of Allah that the wife of His messenger should be a woman" ".so sympathetic and pure as Khadija

Khadija was the embodiment of piety and purity, and she was a guardian of the supreme ideals and the loftiest values in life. It is most probable that if Muhammad Mustafa had not appeared on the scene, Khadija might have spent her life in the single state. Muhammad Mustafa, the Messenger

of Allah, had once said about his daughter, Fatima Zahra, that except Ali ibn Abi Talib, no one was worthy of marrying her. It would be just as true to say that except .Muhammad no one else was worthy of marrying Khadija

In this regard, A. Yusuf Ali, the translator and commentator of Quran Majid, writes as :follows

The only youthful marriage of the holy Prophet was his first marriage - that with Hadhrat Khadija, the best of women and the best of wives. He married her fifteen years before he received his call to Apostleship; their married life lasted for twenty-five years, and their mutual devotion was of the noblest, judged by spiritual as well as social standards. During her life he had no other wife, which was unusual for a man of his standing among his people. When she died, his age was ۵۰, and but for two considerations, he would probably never have married again, as he was most .abstemious in his physical life

The two considerations which governed his later marriages were: (۱) compassion and clemency as when he wanted to provide for suffering widows, who could not be provided for in any other way in that state of society; some of them, like Sauda, had issue by their former marriage, requiring protection; (۲) help in his duties of leadership, with women, who had to be instructed and kept together in the large .Muslim family, where women and men had similar social rights

Muhammad Mustafa, the Apostle of Allah, welcomed

every opportunity to express his admiration, and affection for Khadija, and in acknowledging her great and signal services to Islam. He did so, in the first place, to comply with the commandment of Allah enshrined in the following verses of His Book:

1. (And solemnly rehearse God's favors upon you. (Chapter ۲; verse ۲۳۱)

2. (But the bounty of thy Lord - rehearse and proclaim. (Chapter ۹۳; verse ۱۱)

Muhammad Mustafa, the slave and messenger of Allah, received many favors and bounties from Him - through Khadija - and he rehearsed and proclaimed them.

In the second place, Muhammad Mustafa liked to restate the great deeds of Khadija in the service of Allah and Islam, out of his love for her. It was one way for him to express love. It was also one way for him to recapture the time he and Khadija had spent together in Makka. One can clearly see that in his reminiscences, he was visiting or rather re-living his past, and one can also discern in them faint traces of nostalgia. There must have been moments in his life, as there are in the life of every individual, when he was overcome by nostalgia.

The authors of two famous books, Isaba and Isti'ab, have quoted Hadhrat Ayesha as saying:

"Whenever the Messenger of Allah left the house to go anywhere, he remembered Khadija; he praised her and he blessed her."

With passing years of married life, the love of Muhammad and Khadija gained in depth and strength. With her love,

she banished all his anxieties, fears and sorrows, as noted before. To use an oriental metaphor, Khadija plucked all the thorns out of the life of Muhammad Mustafa, and in their stead, she planted roses of love and tulips of affection. Those flowers never withered; their color, fragrance and freshness were everlasting. If ever there was a marriage that was "evergreen," it was the marriage of Muhammad and Khadija; it was as fresh on the last day as it was on the first. Khadija remained forever alive in his heart. It was her name which was on his lips at all times, and it was her love which .filled his heart. Just talking about her and complimenting her made him happy

Every word and every act of Khadija pointed up her sagacity. In selecting her husband, she exhibited astounding intuition and perspicacity of the highest order. But intuition and perspicacity are gifts which other women can also have, and Khadija was not the only woman who was endowed with them. The only explanation that she made an inspired decision in marrying Muhammad Mustafa, is that her judgment was guided by Allah Ta'ala Himself. She could, therefore, never misjudge. When she met Muhammad, the future Prophet, she recognized in him the Ultimate in Sublimity, and she put her destiny in his blessed hands. Those hands elevated her destiny, and made .it Sublime

Chapter ۱۷: Khadija and her Co-wives

Surprisingly, all the ladies in the household of Muhammad Mustafa, the messenger of Allah, were not altogether free from

some of the weaknesses which are supposed to be characteristic of women. Some of his wives suffered from jealousy, and they were not very squeamish about showing it .either. The incident of "honey" will make this point clear

One of the wives of the Messenger of Allah was Zaynab bint Jahash. She knew that her husband was fond of honey. She, therefore, obtained the variety of honey which he liked very much. It so happened that Zaynab was the most beautiful of the wives of the Messenger of Allah. He thought very highly of her. This was a cause of some anxiety to Hadhrat Ayesha bint Abu Bakr, another of his wives. She feared lest he gave all his love to Zaynab, to the exclusion of his other wives. Therefore, she and Hafsa bint Umar, a third wife of the Prophet, worked out a scheme the purpose of .which was to make him dislike honey

The rest of the story is told by Hadhrat Ayesha herself. Imam Bukhari has quoted her :in his Book of Talag (Divorce), and Book of Tafsir (of Sura Tahreem) as follows

I and Hafsa made this plan that when the Messenger of Allah visits any one of us, she should tell him that his mouth reeks with "maghafeer." (maghafeer is something sweet to taste but has a pungent and unpleasant odor. Muhammad Mustafa was very sensitive on this point. He hated strong odors). It so happened that Hafsa was the wife he visited first. As soon as he

entered her chamber, she said: "O Messenger of Allah! Your mouth has the odor of maghafeer." He said: "I did not eat maghafeer. But when I was with Zaynab, she gave me some honey to eat. It is possible that the honey had the odor of maghafeer. But in ".future, I shall not eat honey

Here two wives of Muhammad Mustafa - Ayesha and Hafsa -are seen working against a third wife - Zaynab. Zaynab had not done any harm to Ayesha and Hafsa. She was a cousin of the Prophet; he was the son of her maternal uncle. She loved him and he loved her. She knew his likes and dislikes, and kept a certain variety of honey .at home which she knew, was his favorite

Muhammad's love for Zaynab kindled the flames of jealousy in the heart of Ayesha. To quell those flames, she hatched a scheme with Hafsa against Zaynab and implemented it. Apparently, these two ladies did not trust their husband for fairplay. They thought that he was being partial to Zaynab - perhaps at their expense. If they .had trusted him, they would not have hatched such a scheme

Abul Kalam Azad says that jealousy is an instinct of women, and it can overcome all other instincts in them. Ayesha, he says, was led by this very human instinct to improvise an artifice to make her husband spend less time with Zaynab than he was .doing

.Muhammad Mustafa told these two ladies that he would not eat honey again

This must have pleased both of them because they probably believed that their plot was successful. But at this point, Revelation intervened and clinched the matter with :the following verse

O prophet! Why holdest thou to be forbidden that which Allah has made lawful to thee? Thou seekest to please thy consorts. But Allah is oft-forgiving, most merciful. ((Chapter ۶۶; verse ۱

Hadhrat Ayesha and Hadhrat Hafsa did not want their husband to eat honey, and he agreed not to, but then Allah Ta'ala Himself had to remind him that the consumption of honey was quite lawful, and that he ought not to deny himself the pleasure of .eating it

Muhammad Mustafa, of course, returned to Zaynab's apartment and enjoyed honey .as he had done before

Mary the Copt

In the year ۱۰ A.H., the governor of Egypt, sent a slave girl called Mary the Copt to Medina to wait on Muhammad Mustafa. Mary soon won a place for herself in his affections and his home. He loved her and she also loved him. From her, he had a son whom he called Ibrahim. Ibrahim was born late in the life of his father. The father, .therefore, loved him immensely

Ibrahim was a special gift which Allah bestowed upon His slaves, Muhammad Mustafa .and Mary the Copt

To God belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. He creates what He wills (and plans). He bestows (children) male or female according to His will (and plan), or He bestows both males and females, and He

leaves barren whom He will: for He is full of knowledge and power. (Chapter ۴۲; verses ۴۹, ۵۰)

Muhammad Mustafa and Mary the Copt were blessed by Allah with the birth of their son, Ibrahim. They thanked Him for the great blessing which filled their life and their home with happiness.

But the birth of Ibrahim did not bring happiness to some other wives of his father.

D. S. Margoliouth

His (the Prophet's) last years were brightened for a time by the birth of a son to his Coptic concubine (sic) Mary whom he acknowledged as his own, and whom he called after the mythical (sic) founder of his religion, Ibrahim. This concubine (sic) having been the object of the extreme envy of his many childless wives, the auspicious event occasioned them the most painful heartburnings; which indeed were speedily allayed by the death of the child (who lived only ۱۱ months).

(Mohammed and the Rise of Islam, London)

One of the wives of the Prophet to whom the birth of Ibrahim occasioned heartburning, was Hadhrat Ayesha.

Hadhrat Ayesha was of course jealous of Mary - her new co-wife, and hated her. Unfortunately, her hatred of Mary was not confined to Mary alone; it went beyond her, and reached her infant son. Ayesha hated Ibrahim. It never occurred to her that she ought to love Ibrahim, not only because he was the darling of the Prophet, but also because he was an infant. But if Ayesha was unable to overcome jealousy and hatred, and was unable

to show any love to the baby, she ought, at least, to have pretended to love him, if .only to please his father. Ayesha could not do even this

Ayesha could not show any love to Ibrahim, not even for the sake of appearance. But there is one thing she could have done, and that was to refrain from showing her .hatred for him

It is amazing that whereas Ayesha was so abundantly endowed with feelings of hatred, jealousy and resentment, she appears to have been singularly devoid of the tenderness which is a universal characteristic of women. She did not show any tenderness. In the matter of children, and especially the infants, even a cruel woman becomes tender. But not Ayesha. Far from being tender to the beloved son of her .husband, she cursed him and cast many aspersions on him

.Alas, Ibrahim did not live long. He died in infancy

Muhammad Husayn Haykal

When Mary gave birth to Ibrahim, the event brought to Muhammad, a man past sixty" years of age, great joy. Because of the birth of the baby, the position of his mother - Mary -also improved. Muhammad now looked upon her as a free wife, indeed, as one .enjoying a most favored position

It was inevitable that the birth of Ibrahim would kindle fires of jealousy in the hearts" of the other wives of Muhammad who were all barren. It was also natural that the Prophet's love and affection for the newborn baby and his mother, fanned the flames of that

jealousy. Muhammad had liberally rewarded Salma, the wife of Abu Rafi, and the midwife for Ibrahim. He also distributed grain to all the poor in Medina. He assigned the infant to the care of Umm Sayf, a wet nurse, who owned seven goats, and she was to give their milk to him. Every day Muhammad visited the house of Mary to see his son's bright face and to take him in his arms. All this incited fierce jealousy in the hearts of the barren wives. The question was how long these wives would endure this .agony

One day the proud new father, Muhammad Mustafa, walked into Ayesha's chamber," carrying his son in his arms, to show him to her. He called her attention to the great resemblance of the baby to himself. Ayesha looked at the baby, and said that she saw no resemblance at all. When the Prophet expressed delight how his son was growing, Ayesha responded tartly that any child given the amount of milk which Ibrahim was getting, would grow just as big and strong as he. Indeed, the birth of Ibrahim brought so much heart-burning to the wives of the prophet that they went beyond these and similar caustic answers. It reached such proportions that Revelation itself voiced a special condemnation. Without a doubt, the whole affair left an imprint on the life of .the Prophet as well as on the history of Islam

Since the Prophet granted to his wives special rights and privileges at a time

when Arab women amounted to nothing at all in society, it was natural for them to abuse the liberty which none of their peers had ever enjoyed before. This liberty led some of them to criticize the Prophet himself so severely as to roil up his disposition for all day. He often ignored some of his wives, and avoided others in order to discourage them from abusing their privileges. Even so, one of them was so driven by her jealousy as to exceed all limits of decency. But when Mary gave birth to Ibrahim, they lost all composure and self-control. It was for this reason that Ayesha went as far as denying all resemblance between the Prophet and his son, a denial which ".amounted to an accusation of adultery on the part of the innocent Mary

(The Life of Muhammad, Cairo, ۱۹۳۵)

Allah saved His loving slave, Khadija, from the torment of being forced, by the customs of the country, to share the attentions and love of her husband with his other wives. But if she had a co-wife, how would she have treated her? Would she have been jealous of her? Never. Jealousy was as far from her as one pole is from the other. She would not have hurt her co-wife or co-wives. She never hurt a neighbor, a maid, or a slave. She never hurt even animals, much less any humans. She passed .through life graced with angelic qualities

.After the death of Khadija, Muhammad Mustafa married many other women

But no one among them could ever approximate Khadija for excellence. Among them, there were women of different backgrounds, and they were of very different casts of character. Some of them, it appears, never realized that their husband was the chosen one of God Himself, and had a rank and a status beyond the reach of every .other mortal

D. S. Margoliouth

The residence of the wives in the Prophet's harem was short, owing to unsuitability of temper; in one or more cases the newcomers were taught by the jealous wives of the Prophet formularies which, uttered by them in ignorance of the meaning, made the Prophet discharge them on the spot. One was discharged for declaring on the death of the infant Ibrahim that had his father been a prophet, he would not have died – a ".remarkable exercise of the "reasoning power

(Mohammed and the Rise of Islam, London)

To Muhammad Mustafa the conduct of some of the women he married in Medina, must have seemed to be a strange counterpoint to the deportment of Khadija. The latter's deportment had been all sweetness and light. Her every word and every deed had comported with her aim to fill the house of her husband with bliss, and she was .eminently successful in realizing it

Muhammad Husayn Haykal of Egypt and Abul Kalam Azad of India, have quoted various collectors and commentators of Hadith as saying that Hadhrat Abu Bakr and Hadhrat Umar once sought permission of the Prophet to visit him. When they were

admitted to his presence, they found him sitting silent, surrounded by his wives. (These ladies were demanding more money from their husband as they said, they could not live in poverty). Umar said: "O Prophet of Allah, if my daughter was ever seen or heard asking me for money, I would surely pull her hair." The Prophet laughed, and said: "Here are my wives surrounding me and asking me for money." Immediately, Abu Bakr rose and pulled the hair of his daughter, Ayesha; and so did Umar to his daughter, Hafsa. Both Abu Bakr and Umar said to their daughters: "Do you dare ask the Prophet of Allah what he cannot afford to give?" They answered: "No, by God, we do not ask him any such thing."

"It was in connection with this conversation between Abu Bakr and Umar and their daughters," says Muhammad Husayn Haykal, "that the following verses were revealed:"

O prophet! Say to thy consorts: "If it be that ye desire the life of this world and its glitter, - then come! I will provide for your enjoyment and set you free in a handsome manner.

But if ye seek Allah and his apostle, and the home of hereafter, verily Allah has prepared for the well-doers amongst you a great reward. (Chapter ۳۳; verses ۲۸, ۲۹)

Though perhaps all wives of the Prophet were united in demanding more money for food and other necessities from him, Ayesha and Hafsa were pressing the demand more vigorously. Abdullah ibn Abbas says that

he once asked Umar bin al-Khattab who were the two wives of the Prophet who were ".most persistent in demanding money from him, and he said: "Ayesha and Hafsa

The Prophet himself lived like an ascetic. He invariably put the needs of the poor and the hungry ahead of his own needs. His lifestyle was known to everyone in Medina and those who knew it better than anyone else, were his own wives. Therefore, when they told him that life for them was exceedingly austere, and that he ought to alleviate its asperity for them by granting them more money, he was surprised. He had perhaps assumed that his wives would also imitate him, and would live lives of strict self-denial as he did. He, therefore, found their joint "representation" most shocking; he perhaps thought that it was prompted by too much attachment to food .and material comforts

Abul Kalam Azad says that the wives of the Prophet, after all, were human, and they too had their human needs and desires. Their demarche, therefore, he adds, is quite .understandable

The Prophet, however, was so displeased with his wives that he separated himself .from them for a whole month

Muhammad Husayn Haykal

Muhammad isolated himself from all his women for a full month and refused to talk about them to anyone. Nor did anyone else dare to talk to him concerning them. Abu Bakr, Umar, and his other in-laws as well, were deeply concerned over the sad fate that awaited the "Mothers of Believers" now that

they had exposed themselves to the anger of the Prophet, and the consequent punishment of God. It was even said that Muhammad had divorced Hafsah, Umar's daughter, after she had divulged the secret she had promised to keep. The market-place of Medina was abuzz with rumors about the impending divorce of the Prophet's wives. The wives, for their part, were repentant and apprehensive. They regretted that their jealousy of one another had carried them away, and that they had abused and harmed their gentle husband. Muhammad spent most of his time in a store-house he owned, placing his servant Rabah at its doorstep as long as he was inside. Therein .he used to sleep on a very hard bed of coarse date branches

(The Life of Muhammad, Cairo, ۱۹۳۵)

Some of the wives of the Prophet showed themselves extremely suspicious. Their suspiciousness could not have made him very happy in his conjugal life. Professor Margoliouth has quoted the Musnad of Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal (Vol. iv, p. ۲۲۱) in this :regard, in his book Mohammed and the Rise of Islam as follows

At dead of night, it is said, the Prophet went out to the cemetery called Al-Baki, and" asked forgiveness for the dead who were buried there. This indeed he had done before; Ayesha once followed him like a detective when he started out at night, supposing him to be bent on some amour: but his destination she found was the ".graveyard

The ۶۶th chapter of Quran Majid called Tahreem, deals exclusively with

the subject of the conduct of the wives of the Prophet. One of its verses has been quoted above in connection with the incident of "honey." Its fourth and fifth verses :read as follows

If you two turn in repentance to Him (to Allah), your hearts are indeed so inclined; but if you back up each other against him, truly Allah is his protector, and Gabriel, and (every) righteous one among those who believe, - and furthermore the angels - will .back (him) up

It may be, if he divorced you (all), that Allah will give him in exchange consorts better - ,than you

There is not a consensus of the commentators of Quran Majid and the historians upon the particular incident which is under reference in these two verses. Some of them say that the Prophet told something in confidence to Hadhrat Hafsa. She was, however, unable to keep the secret, and disclosed it to Hadhrat Ayesha. This breach of confidence drew the foregoing censure upon one of them for "betraying a confidence, and upon the other for encouraging the betrayal," thus "abetting each ".other's wrong

Explaining the verses of the ۶۶th chapter of Quran Majid, A. Yusuf Ali, its translator :and commentator, writes as follows

The Prophet's household was not like other households. The Consorts of Purity were expected to hold a higher standard of behavior and reticence than ordinary women, as they had higher work to perform. But they were human beings after all, and were subject to the weaknesses of their

sex, and they sometimes failed. The imprudence of Hadhrat Aisha once caused serious difficulties: the holy Prophet's mind was sore distressed, and he renounced the company of his wives for some time . ... Hadhrat Umar's daughter, Hafsa, was also sometimes apt to presume on her position, and when the two combined in secret counsel, and discussed matters and disclosed secrets to each other, they caused much sorrow to the holy Prophet, whose heart was tender and who treated all his .family with exemplary patience and affection

Chapter ۱۸: Khadija and Ayesha

Hadhrat Ayesha was jealous not only of those wives of Muhammad Mustafa who were living at the same time and in the same house as she was, but also of a wife who was long since dead, viz., Khadija. In fact, she was more jealous of Khadija, the dead wife, than she was of any of her living co-wives. She was so jealous of Khadija that .she reserved her most bitter blasts against her

- ,Abbas Mahmud al-Akkad says in his book

Ayesha did not nurse such strong feelings of jealousy toward any wife of the" Messenger of Allah as she did toward Khadija. The reason for this jealousy was that Khadija had made a place for herself in the heart of her husband which no one else .could take. Muhammad Mustafa recounted her merits night and day

Muhammad Mustafa was constantly helping the poor and the sick. On one occasion, Ayesha asked him the reason for this, and he said: "Khadija had told me

".to treat these people with kindness and love. It was her last wish

When Ayesha heard this, she flared into a rage, and shouted: "Khadija! Khadija! It ".seems that for you there is no other woman on the face of the earth except Khadija

The Apostle was a man of unlimited forbearance. But when he saw Ayesha's outburst, ".he stopped talking with her

If this incident points up the love that Khadija had for the poor and the sick, it also points up the esteem in which she was held by Muhammad Mustafa. He acted upon her wishes, notwithstanding the overt reaction and resentment of Ayesha. He, in fact, acted upon the wishes of Khadija as long as he lived. Didn't he know that any reference to Khadija displeased Ayesha? Of course he did. Therefore, when she asked him why he was feeding the poor, clothing the naked, and comforting the cheerless, he ought to have given her a "discreet" answer, one that would not have frayed her nerves. But he didn't. He just said: "I am carrying out the wishes of ".Khadija

Was this a coincidence that the last thought that Khadija had in this world, was the welfare of the poor, the sick, the orphans, the widows and the disabled? No. There is nothing coincidental about it. Everything that Khadija ever said or did, was precalculated to win the pleasure of Allah. And she knew that she could win the pleasure of Allah by giving love and service to the most vulnerable

.of His humble slaves

Khadija's largess was reaching the hungry, the poor and the sick, even after her !death. Her charity never came to a halt - in life or in death

The name and image of Khadija were etched on the heart of Muhammad Mustafa, .and neither the hand of time nor the tantrums of Ayesha could efface them

Hadhrat Ayesha was aware that she could not dissuade Muhammad Mustafa from praising Khadija, and from talking about her. But this knowledge did not put a crimp upon her vis-a-vis her "anti-Khadija" stance. Abbas Mahmud al-Akkad of Egypt, :relates another incident in his book, Avesha, as follows

One day the Messenger of Allah was praising Khadija when Ayesha said: "O Messenger of Allah! Why do you talk all the time about that old woman who had ".inflamed gums? After all, Allah has given you better wives than her

Muhammad Mustafa said: "No Ayesha! Allah never gave me a better wife than Khadija. She believed in me at a time when other people denied me. She put all her wealth at my service when other people withheld theirs from me. And what's more, ".Allah gave me children qpft through Khadija

It appears that Ayesha's hatred of Khadija which she expressed so blatantly, backfired upon her. Her husband told her that Allah gave him children only through .Khadija whereas his other wives could not give him any child

To be childless, is a very painful experience for a woman. But if she is told that she is barren, the

pain for her becomes a torture. And if it is her own husband who taunts her for her .barrenness, then the pain becomes an agony

But Ayesha could never repress her hatred of Khadija. She herself said once: "I have never been so jealous of any woman as I am of Khadija." She showed her jealousy over and over again, and each time she elicited from the Messenger of Allah the same .anger and displeasure

The last child of Muhammad Mustafa and Khadija was their daughter, Fatima Zahra. She was born in the fifth year of the Proclamation, and eight years before the Migration. Her brothers, Qasim and Abdullah, had died before her. It was the pleasure of Allah that the line of descent of His messenger and friend, Muhammad Mustafa, should begin with his daughter, Fatima Zahra. She was the joy of her father's heart, and the light of his eyes. He cherished her and her children as his greatest treasures. They were, for him, the epitome of the purest of all joys - both terrestrial and .celestial

From time to time, Muhammad Mustafa had to leave Medina on his campaigns. It was his invariable practice that he sent his army ahead of him, and he himself was the last .one to leave the city

The last thing that Muhammad Mustafa did before leaving Medina, was to visit his daughter, Fatima Zahra, the blessed one, and her children. He entrusted them to the .protection of God, and bade them farewell

The first thing that

Muhammad Mustafa did when he returned to Medina, was to visit the house of his daughter. He invoked God's blessings upon her and her family. During his frequent absences from Medina, there was nothing that he missed so much as the children of his daughter. When he saw them, he exchanged greetings with them, kissed them, dandled them, and played with them. Once he was with them, his weariness from the campaigns, and from long marches in the dust and heat of Arabia, vanished, and he .was refreshed and restored

It was a pattern of life for Muhammad Mustafa, and he never veered from it. His .emotional life revolved around the house of his daughter

Hadhrat Ayesha didn't share her husband's love for his daughter. Abbas Mahmud al-:Akkad says in his book, Ayesha

In the first place, Fatima was the daughter of Khadija; and the Messenger of Allah loved Khadija so much that he was constantly praising and complimenting her. Ayesha resented this. In the second place, Ayesha was childless. Whenever she saw her husband coddling and cuddling the children of Fatima which he was doing all the time, she was further embittered being painfully reminded of her own sterility. The ".relations, therefore, of Ayesha and Fatima, were not very "friendly

Chapter ۱۹: Khadija and Islam

Today, Islam is the greatest force in the world. Its enemies cannot do it any harm. It is like a mighty oak which the storms of the world cannot uproot. Yet there was a time when this mighty oak was a

tiny sapling, and desperately needed someone to protect it from the hurricanes of .idolatry and polytheism which threatened to uproot it

Muslims may forget it but Islam cannot forget that in its infancy, it were Abu Talib and Khadija who protected it. They made Islam invulnerable. Abu Talib protected the sapling of Islam from the tempests of misbelief and heathenism; and Khadija irrigated it with her wealth. She did not let the sapling of Islam die from draught. In fact, she didn't even let it wilt from neglect. Protecting Islam was, for Abu Talib and Khadija, their foremost duty. Islam was their first love, and it was a love which they passed on, as their "legacy" to their children. If they - Abu Talib and Khadija - had protected the tree of Islam from its enemies in the lifetime of Muhammad Mustafa, and had "irrigated" it with vast quantities of gold and silver, their children and their grandchildren protected it, from its enemies after his death, and irrigated it with their blood. Their blood was the most sacrosanct blood in all creation. After all, it was the blood of Muhammad Mustafa himself - the Last and the Greatest of all Messengers of .Allah, and the Chief of all Apostles and Prophets

Khadija was an "eye-witness" of the birth of Islam. She nursed it through its infancy, through its most difficult, and through its most formative years. Islam was given shape and design in her home. If any home can be called the

cradle of Islam, it was her home. She "reared" Islam. If any home can be called the "axis" of Islam, it was her home; Islam revolved around her home. Her home was the "home" of Quran Majid -the Book of Allah, and the religious and political code of .Islam

.It was in her home that Gabriel was bringing Revelations from Heaven for ten years

Khadija has collected more "firsts" in the history of nascent Islam than anyone else. She was the first wife of the last messenger of Allah. She was the first Believer. She was the very first mortal to declare that the Creator was only One, and that Muhammad was His messenger. Next to her husband, she was the very first individual who heard the Voice of Revelation. She was the first person who offered prayers to Allah with her husband. Whenever he went into the presence of Allah, she was his constant companion. She was the first Mother of Believers. She was the only wife of Muhammad Mustafa who did not have to co-exist with a co-wife. All the love, all the affection and all the friendship of her husband, were hers and hers alone - !exclusively

When Muhammad Mustafa proclaimed his mission as the messenger of Allah, and told the Arabs not to worship idols, and called upon them to rally under the banner of Tawhid, a tidal wave of sorrows broke upon him. The polytheists began to thirst for his blood. They invented new and ingenious ways of tormenting

him, and they made many attempts to stifle his voice forever. In those times of stress and distress, Khadija was a bastion of strength for him. It was only because of her and Abu Talib that the polytheists could not disrupt his work of preaching and propagating Islam. She made, in this manner, a most important contribution to the .survival and propagation of Islam

Khadija set basic standards that spell domestic peace, harmony, happiness and fulfillment, and she upheld and reflected them in her life. She demonstrated that the key to a family's strength and happiness is the degree of emotional closeness between its members. She spelled out the rights and duties of husbands and wives. The standards set by her, became the "blueprint" for family life in Islam. Muhammad Mustafa and Khadija spent twenty-five years together, and in those years, they formulated the "laws" that make a marriage successful and a life happy. Since then, even in temporal terms, the rest of the world has not been able to find better laws. .Islam incorporated the same laws in its own programme

Khadija turned the abstractions of idealism into reality. Her life with Muhammad is concrete evidence of that fact. What she gave to the world was not merely a set of principles or theoretical ideas but an experience, rich in moments of pure .enchantment with Islam, and subtle rhythms of love for Allah and His Messenger

As mentioned earlier, the pagan Arabs had a sense of honor gone all awry. It was

their "sense of honor" which impelled them to kill their daughters. Islam of course put an end to this barbaric and horrendous practice by making it at once a sin against Allah, and a crime against humanity. Besides putting an end to female infanticide, .Islam also gave dignity, honor and rights to women, and it guaranteed those rights

Allah Ta'ala wished to demonstrate that the laws of Islam were all practicable. To demonstrate the practicability of those laws, and to show the Islamic "Design of Life," He chose the house of His slaves, Muhammad and Khadija. Without Khadija, the laws of Islam would have remained meaningless. In fact, it is even possible that .Muhammad Mustafa could not have promulgated those laws without her

One of the greatest blessings that Muhammad Mustafa and Khadija received from Allah Ta'ala was their daughter, Fatima Zahra. As noted before, Fatima was born after the death of her brothers, Qasim and Abdullah. She was only five years old when her mother died. After the death of her mother, Muhammad Mustafa, the messenger of Allah, became both a father and a mother for her. In bringing up his daughter, the Messenger of Allah was demonstrating the applicability of the laws of Islam. Since he is the model for all Muslims, they have to imitate him in all his deeds. He bestowed the .utmost love upon, and showed the greatest respect to his daughter

Both in Makka and in Medina, many important persons, such as princes and leaders of powerful

tribes, came to see the messenger of Allah. He never rose from the ground to greet any of them. But if he heard that his daughter, Fatima Zahra, was coming to see him, he rose from the floor, went forward to greet her, escorted her back, and gave her the place of honor to sit. He did not show so much esteem and regard to anyone at !any time in his life - man or woman

Such is the bounty of Allah, which He bestows on whom He will: and Allah is the Lord of (the highest bounty. (Chapter ۶۲; verse ۴

Allah Ta'ala bestowed His Bounty upon Fatima Zahra, the daughter of His friend and .His messenger, Muhammad Mustafa

It was Khadija's only daughter, Fatima Zahra, who became the recipient of the accolades of Heaven in the ۷۶th chapter of Quran Majid - Sura Dahr. In fact, the whole chapter is "dedicated" to her and to her family comprising her husband, Ali ibn Abi Talib; her children, Hasan and Husain; and her maid, Fizza. She also became the "exegesis" of the ۱۰۸th Chapter of Quran Majid - Sura Kauthar (=Abundance). Allah Ta'ala gave Khadija a son-in-law like Ali ibn Abi Talib who became the Lion of Allah; "the Right Arm of Islam;" and the shield and buckler of Muhammad Mustafa; and He gave her grandsons like Hasan and Husain who became the Riders of the Shoulders ".of the Messenger of Allah, and "the Princes of the Youth of Heaven

,Without a doubt

Islam means the practice of the house of Khadija; and without a doubt, Quran Majid is the "dialect" of her family. Her daughter, Fatima Zahra, and her grand-children, Hasan and Husain, grew up "speaking" Quran Majid. She has the same relationship to Islam and Quran Majid that light has to the eyes, lustre to a pearl; and fragrance to a .rose

Even the most eloquent of languages fails adequately to express or fittingly to commend, Khadija's merits. But Allah Ta'ala has promised His reward to his loving :slaves like Khadija in the following verses of His Book

.Those who have faith and do righteous deeds, - they are the best of creatures

Their reward is with Allah: gardens of eternity, beneath which rivers flow; they will dwell therein for ever; Allah well pleased with them, and they with him: all this for such (as fear their lord and cherisher. (Chapter ۹۸; verses ۷, ۸

Chapter ۲۰: Khadija and Muslim Historians

point

In their history books, the highest tribute that most of the Muslim historians have paid to Khadija, is that she strengthened Islam with her wealth. They pay this tribute and then they pass on to other matters. It is true that it was Khadija's wealth that made Islam viable; but it is only a partial truth. There is little, if any, acknowledgement by the historians of what Khadija's support - material and moral - did for Islam and the Muslims. Far from acknowledging her great services, many of them have either distorted truth or have strangled truth

".or have cooked up stories of their own, and have dished them out as historical "facts

Not all the history of the early days of Islam is factual; some of it is "synthetic." This synthetic history was written for or was dictated by special interest groups. Many fairy tales found their way into the history of Islam in this manner and Truth was .quietly given a burial

Spinning fairy tales, putting them into circulation and burying truth was a conspiracy in which the leaders of the prayer-congregations, orators of the pulpits in the mosques, teachers in schools, professors in colleges, doctors of law, judges of the courts, courtiers of the kings, sultans and caliphs; and the kings, sultans and caliphs themselves, all had a hand. The historian had little choice in the matter. Even if he was a man of integrity and principle, he dared not challenge the party line. If he did, he could imperil his own life. If he wrote factual history, his wife could become a widow, and his children could become orphans. He, therefore, adopted the "pragmatic" .course. He ditched the truth, and wrote spurious history

Maulana Shibli Numani, the dean of the Indian historians of Islam, writes in his Life of the Prophet, Volume I (Azamgarh, India, ۱۹۷۶), that during the reign of the caliph Muawiya (d. A.D. ۶۸۰), and the later Umayyads, thousands and tens of thousands of Hadith (۱) were churned out by hadithmanufacturing factories, and were put into circulation. "Historians" on the payroll of the

government, strung together "fact" after "fact," and incorporated them in their history books. And for ۹۰ years, the names of Ali ibn Abi Talib, and other members of the Bani Hashim were cursed from every pulpit in the Muslim world – from Sind in India to Spain in Europe. Children were born, they grew up, and they died, hearing .these curses and never knowing the truth

In A.D. ۷۵۰, the Abbasis seized the caliphate, and they exterminated the Umayyads. But they were no less rabid in their animosity to the family of Muhammad Mustafa than were the Umayyads. In fact, some of them outdid the Umayyads in persecuting his children and their supporters. The one characteristic that both dynasties shared, .was their built-in animosity to the family and the children of Muhammad Mustafa

Edward Gibbon

The persecutors of Mohammed usurped the inheritance of his children; and the .champions of idolatry became the supreme heads of his religion and empire

(The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire)

Robert Payne

Again and again we shall find Muhammadans mercilessly destroying the living... .(descendants of Muhammad. (p. ۸۴-۸۵

For ۳۵۰ years, the descendants of Abu Sufyan and those who claimed descent from (Abbas had made war on the descendants of Muhammad's flesh. (p. ۱۹۳

Throughout all the centuries of Islam, a strange fate had hovered over the descendants of Muhammad. It was as though that part of the world which eagerly accepted the Messenger of God, had turned forever against his living descendants. (p. (۳۰۶

(The Holy Sword, ۱۹۵۹)

The campaign of the

Abbasi caliphs against the members of the family of the Prophet, or his children, also lasted as long as their caliphate - ۵۰۰ years. It was during their caliphate that the histories of Islam were written, and Hadith were collected, edited and were published. Some half-hearted attempts were perhaps made by a few conscientious scholars at separating facts from bunk and junk, and at salvaging Truth from the contexture of lies but with little success. Many of the books of history and Hadith are saddled forever with "facts" or "hadith" (= a statement of the Prophet) which were planted in .them

History, it has been rightly said, is the propaganda of the victorious party. The victorious parties, in the history of Islam, were, first the Umayyads and then the Abbasis which succeeded, in the words of Gibbon, in "usurping the inheritance of the children of Mohammed." Once they had the instruments of power in their hands, they .were free to write or to manipulate the history of the early days of Islam as they liked

Since most of the books of the history of Islam were "inspired" by what the Communists call "the ruling circles," I shall identify their authors as the "court historians." These historians foisted upon their readers the following three myths vis-a-vis the life of Hadhret Khadija, may Allah be pleased with her and bless her.

.She was forty years old when she and Muhammad Mustafa were married .۱

.She was married twice before she and Muhammad Mustafa were married .۲

.۳

.She and Muhammad Mustafa had six children - two boys and four daughters

.We shall discuss these myths point by point

The Age of Khadija .۱

Most of the Muslim historians have stated that Khadija was ۴۰-years old when she married Muhammad Mustafa. So many historians have repeated this figure that now it is believed as a gospel truth. Yet this figure is open to question on the following :grounds

No historian knows the year in which Khadija was born. The figure "۴۰" is only an estimate, and it is an over-estimate. Whereas it is true that Khadija was older than Muhammad Mustafa, she was not ۱۵ years older as claimed by most of the historians, .but only a few years older than him

Arabia is a very hot country, and Arab girls reach maturity much more rapidly than girls do in cold or temperate climates. Hadhrat Ayesha is said to have been married .when she was only eleven years old. Other Arab girls were also married quite early

In a country like Arabia, a woman could not spend forty years of her life waiting to be married. At forty, the best years of a woman's life are already behind her - in Arabia or in any other country. But even if she marries at forty, she cannot entertain any hope of having children. Even in cold and temperate zones, a woman, in most cases, is past .her child-bearing age at ۴۰. In Arabia, this happens, probably, much earlier

Khadija spent many years of her life in the single state. As

noted before, she received many offers of marriage from the lords and princes of Arabia but she turned them down. They could not impress her with their wealth. If they were rich, she was immeasurably richer than the richest of them. And in such personal qualities as the qualities of head, hand and heart, all of them were like the dust of her feet. Anyone trying to impress her with his wealth or power would be naive, if not foolish, indeed. Therefore, she marked time until the man who really .impressed her - Muhammad Mustafa - came along, and she married him

Alleged Marriages of Khadija .۲

Khadija was never married before she married Muhammad Mustafa. Her marriage with Muhammad was her first and last marriage. The same historians who have claimed that Khadija was married twice before she married Muhammad, have reported that all the lords of Quraysh and the princes of the Arabs, sought her hand in marriage but she didn't condescend to consider any of them for a matrimonial alliance. If she had been married twice before, she ought to have had no hesitation in .marrying a third time

Khadija's Children .۳

It is alleged by the court historians of the Umayyads that Khadija and Muhammad had :six children, and they give their names as follows

Qasim ۲. Abdullah ۳. Zaynab ۴. Rukayya ۵. Umm Kulthum ۶. Fatima Zahra .۱

Muhammad Mustafa and Khadija were the parents of three and not six children. They :were

Qasim ۲. Abdullah ۳. Fatima Zahra .۱

- Out of these three children, the first two

Qasim and Abdullah - were boys, and both of them died in their infancy, as noted .before. The third and their last child was their daughter - Fatima Zahra

Who were the other three girls, viz., Zaynab, Rukayya and Umm Kulthum? This .question is answered later in this chapter

All these three claims have gained currency as "facts" but are, nevertheless fairy-tales. The "patina" of age has made them "respectable" so that most of the Muslims believe them to be true. But these are not by any means, the only tales which, for

Most Muslims, have acquired the status of facts. There are many other fables which .have "graduated" as facts

Following examples will show that this can happen even when there is no deliberate .intent to twist facts or to mangle truth

Many Muslims believe that the character designated in verses ۸۳, ۸۶ and ۹۴ of the .۱ ۱۸th chapter of Quran Majid (Kahf or the Cave) as Zul-Qarnain, was Alexander the :Great of Macedonia. Even Abdullah Yusuf Ali shares this view. He says

Personally, I have not the least doubt that Zul-Qarnain is meant to be Alexander the" "...Great, the historic Alexander, and not the legendary Alexander

And yet, Zul-Qarnain might have been anyone but Alexander the Great. Zul-Qarnain was one of the chosen ones of Allah; perhaps he was a prophet. Alexander, on the other hand, was a heathen. He worshipped the gods and goddesses not only of .Greece but also of Egypt, Babylon and Persia

Harold Lamb

- Alexander had bowed down to strange deities

not only to Zeus, but Ammon-Re of the Egyptian desert, Marduk of the towers of .Babylon, and Ahura, tutelary of the tombs of Persepolis

(Alexander of Macedon, New York, ۱۹۴۶)

Alexander committed many crimes including the murder of two of his oldest friends and most loyal generals, Cleitus and Parmenion. And he engineered the murder of his .own father, Philip

R D. Miles

.There can be little doubt that Alexander became king by becoming a parricide

(Alexander the Great, New York, ۱۹۶۹)

In his wars, Alexander killed hundreds of thousands of innocent men and women - unnecessarily. Perhaps he was overcome by lust for blood. A modern historian says that before his death, he had become insane. And recent research has disclosed that ".he died an "alcoholic megalomaniac

The real name of Hadhret Abdul Muttalib, the grandfather of Muhammad Mustafa, .۲ the Apostle of Allah, was Shaiba. As a young lad, he once rode pillion with his uncle, Muttalib, from Yathrib (Medina) into Makka. The bystanders who saw him, said: "O look! Muttalib has bought a new slave for himself." Muttalib bridled at the remark, and said: "Curse on you. He is not my slave. He is the son of my brother, Hashim." But the name "Abdul Muttalib" - "the slave of Muttalib" stuck to the boy. He is known to .history only by a fake name - Abdul Muttalib. His real name - Shaiba - is forgotten

This example is from the story of Joseph (Prophet Yusut). The following verse .۳ occurs in the ۱۲th chapter of

:(Quran Majid (Sura Yusuf

They said: "truly Joseph and his brother are loved more by our father than we: but we (are a goodly body. Really our father is obviously wandering (in his mind) (Verse ۸

:A. Yusuf Ali has explained this verse as follows

The ten brothers not only envied and hated their innocent younger brothers Joseph" and Benjamin. They despised and dishonored their father as an ignorant old fool - in his dotage. In reality, Jacob had the wisdom to see that his young and innocent sons wanted protection and to perceive Joseph's spiritual greatness. But his wisdom, to them, was folly or madness or imbecility, because it touched their self-love, as truth often does. And they relied on the brute strength of numbers - the ten hefty brethren ".against old Jacob, the lad Joseph, and the boy Benjamin

:Another verse in the same context reads as follows

(They said: "by God! Truly thou art in thine old wandering mind." (Chapter ۱۲; verse ۸۵

:This verse is explained by the translator as follows

They" must be the people around Jacob before the brothers (of Joseph) actually" arrived (from Egypt). These same brothers had sedulously cultivated the calumny that their father was an old dotard, and everybody around believed it, even after its ".authors had given it up. Thus lies die hard, once their get a start

(A. Yusuf Ali)

There are many other examples, in both Muslim and non-Muslim history, of mendacity passing for truth. This is precisely what happened in the case of these

three canards connected with the story of the life of Khadija; they found general .acceptance among the Muslims. Once lies yet a start, they refuse to die

It is also possible that the historians who were collecting material to write the history of the early days of Islam, had access only to those stories which had been skillfully "planted" in the primary sources by the "ruling circles." They were convinced that material obtained through these sources, was authentic, and they incorporated it in .their works

The allegations pertaining to the age, marriage(s), and children of Khadija, were ,.prompted by two reasons, viz

١. Khadija was the mother of Hadhret Fatima Zahra; and she was the mother-in-law of Ali ibn Abi Talib; and the grandmother of Hasan and Husain. She, therefore, could not escape the animosity that the Umayyads and the Abbasis had nursed against all members of the family of Muhammad Mustafa, especially against Ali, Hasan and Husain. The historians, for the most part, shared this animosity with their paymasters; .but if they didn't, they could forfeit their livelihood or even life itself

They, therefore, had to invent some "fact" or "facts" which would minimize Khadija's importance. In selecting "facts" which they or their forerunners had invented, they considered themselves free to exercise their discretion - or their fantasy. But to make their accounts convincing, they had to be extremely subtle or else their animosity would become too obvious, and the worth of their works of history would become .dubious

٢. The mercenary historians wanted

to tell their readers that among the wives of the Prophet, there were some who were just as great or perhaps even greater, than Khadija, and that such a wife was Ayesha. .They had to glorify Ayesha at the expense of Khadija

These historians entertained no fear for the thesis which they were trying to develop from any other wife of Muhammad Mustafa but they were not sure if their efforts to show Ayesha as superior to Khadija would be successful. But they were serendipitous people and made the "discovery" that Khadija was forty years old, and was married twice before she married Muhammad. It was a "discovery" which, in their opinion, could militate against Khadija. On the other hand, they asserted that Ayesha was not .only very young and beautiful but also was a virgin

Through the exercise of such arbitrary logic the historians built up their thesis of the superiority of one wife over the other wives. But did the Prophet marry Ayesha for her youth, beauty and virginity? Abbas Mahmud al-Akkad answers this question in his :book, A-yesha, as follows

As far as we know, the Messenger of Allah did not marry for children. Generally" .,speaking, he married for two reasons, viz

Some women became utterly helpless after the death of their husbands. They had .١ .no next-of-kin to support them. The Apostle married them to provide a home to them

The Apostle wished to break the resistance of the Arab tribes to Islam. One way to .٢ do so was, for

".him to marry the women of those tribes

There was also a third reason for some of the marriages of the Prophet, viz., if he was a teacher for Muslim men, his wives had to be teachers for Muslim women, in all matters of faith and religion. They explained to the Muslim women the meaning of .Quran, and they taught them how to apply the laws of Islam in their personal lives

With the exception of Khadija, the Apostle married all other women for one or more of these reasons. His marriage with

Khadija was the only one which rested upon affection, love and friendship; and for .him, it fulfilled all the aims of marriage

Khadija also taught the laws of Islam to Muslim women but she did so more by .example and less by precept as noted before

The court historians of the Muslims have been repeating some falsehoods and half-truths for centuries, and through such repetition, they have succeeded in convincing the Muslim umma (=community) that Khadija was widowed twice before her marriage .with Muhammad Mustafa

:Writing on the subject of the marriage of Khadija, the author of Raudhatus-Safa says

The principal figures of Quraysh wished to marry Khadija and they proposed to her .(but she did not agree to marry any of them. (Volume ٢, page ٢٧١

:And the author of Raudhatul-Ahbab writes as follows

All the nobles of Quraysh sought marriage with Khadija but she refused to consider .(any of them. (Volume ١, page ١٠٥

,According to the venal historians, at her marriage with Muhammad Mustafa

Khadija was already widowed twice; and she was ۴۰ years old. If this is true, then it means that she was already a middle-aged woman, or perhaps - in a country like Arabia - even past middle-age; and the bloom of youth had long since departed from her. Why were then the lords of Quraysh and the princes of the Arabs so eager to marry her? After all, being rich and powerful as they were, they could have very easily found many young and beautiful women, among them virgins, to marry. Why would they want to marry a widow who was not so young either? It will also not be correct to .say that they were lured by Khadija's wealth. They were themselves very rich

Allama Ali Ahmed Abul Qasim al-Kufi questions the story of the two marriages of Khadija before her marriage with Muhammad Mustafa. He writes in his book, Al-Isti :hg atha

Khadija did not marry anyone before she married Muhammad Mustafa. All historians have unanimously stated that everyone of the chiefs of Quraysh proposed marriage to Khadija, but she turned down all those proposals with contempt. At length she married Muhammad Mustafa. This made the ladies of Quraysh very angry with her. They said that when the lords and princes proposed marriage to her, she refused. And yet, when a young man of Bani Hashim who did not have any wealth or power, proposed to her, she accepted. These ladies could not understand why Khadija spurned the requests of

the rich and the powerful nobles of Arabia for marriage, and went ahead and married a poor man. This is proof that Khadija did not marry anyone before marrying .Muhammad ibn Abdullah

Some people pose the question that if it is assumed that Khadija was married twice before her marriage with Muhammad, and that she was ۴۰ years old at her last marriage, is there anything reprehensible about it? No! If a man or a woman is married more than once or is ۴۰ years old, there is nothing reprehensible about it. The question is not if it is true or false if Khadija was married more than once or if she was ۴۰ years old at her last marriage. The only question is: is it a historical fact that Khadija .was married thrice; or that she was ۴۰ years old at her last marriage. It is not

If one agrees with the venal historians that Khadija was married thrice, and she was ۴۰ years old at her last marriage, nothing diminishes from her status. She remains sublime. But it is simply not true that she was a ۴۰-year old widow when she married Muhammad Mustafa, and, therefore, it is unethical to interpolate falsehoods in the story of her life, or the life of any other man or woman, for that matter. Every man is entitled to his own opinions but not to his own facts. If a seeker of truth wishes to separate facts from opinions, he can do so with

the aid of intellectual and logical analysis. His search for deduction from fixed .principles will be a rewarding experience

Zaynab, Rukayya and Umm Kulthum

Before Khadija married Muhammad Mustafa, there were three girls living in her house in Makka. Their names were Zaynab, Rukayya and Umm Kulthum. They were the daughters of her deceased sister. Their father had died earlier, and when their .mother also died, Khadija brought them into her own house

After Khadija's marriage, all three girls stayed with her as her wards. They probably called Khadija their mother and they probably called Muhammad Mustafa their father. And according to Arab usage, they were known as his daughters because they lived in .his house, and he was their legal guardian

Zaynab was the eldest of these three girls. She was married to a man called Abul-As ibn er-Rabi'. In ۶۲۴ he came with the pagan army of Makka, and fought against Muhammad Mustafa in the battle of Badr. He was captured but he ransomed his .freedom, and returned to Makka. Later, he accepted Islam

The other two girls - Rukayya and Umm Kulthum - were married to Utba and Utayba - the sons of Abu Lahab and Umm Jameel. All three girls were married before the dawn .of Islam; the husbands of all three, therefore, were idolaters

After the Proclamation of Islam, Abu Lahab and his wife, Umm Jameel, both arch-enemies of Islam, were made subjects of a curse in chapter ۱۱۱ of Quran Majid. This aroused their wrath, and they ordered their sons

Utba and Utayba - to divorce their wives and to send them to their home. Both girls - - Rukayya and Umm Kulthum - were divorced, and they returned to the house of .Khadija

Sometime later, Rukayya was married to Uthman bin Affan, a member of the Umayyad clan of the Quraysh, and a future khalifa of the Muslims. She died in ۶۲۴ in Medina. After her death, her sister, Umm Kulthum, was also married to Uthman b. .Affan

Muhammad Husayn Haykal

He (Muhammad) married Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthum to Utbah and Utaybah, the sons of his uncle, Abu Lahab. These marriages did not last, for soon after the advent of Islam, Abu Lahab ordered his two sons to divorce their wives. It was Uthman that .married both of them one after the other

(The Life of Muhammad, Cairo, ۱۹۳۵)

The court historians of the Umayyads, "inspired" by Muawiya bin Abu Sufyan, the founder of the Umayyad dynasty, and his successors, claimed that Rukayya and Umm Kulthum were the daughters of Muhammad Mustafa and Khadija. Since they were married to Uthman - an Umayyad - they called him Dhawin-Nurayn, i.e., "the owner of two lights" - Rukayya and Umm Kulthum. Yet only a little earlier, both of these "lights" had belonged to two idolaters of Makka. Each of these idolaters was, therefore a Dhawin-Nur - the owner of one "light" which he passed on to Uthman. After all, the !"light" or the "lights" remained the same; only the ownership changed

Were these girls the daughters of

Muhammad Mustafa and Khadija as claimed by the mercenary historians? The answer to this question should be sought in (A) Quran Majid, and (B) the testimony of :history. Their answer, set forth hereunder, is unequivocal

A. The Testimony of Quran Majid

If the light of guidance of the Book of Allah means anything to the Muslims, then these three girls - Zaynab, Rukayya and Umm Kulthum - were not, and could not have been the daughters of the Apostle of God and Khadija. They were orphans. The only connection the three of them had with Muhammad and Khadija, was that at one time they lived in their house. Khadija was a patroness of orphans (and widows) even .before her marriage

If Muhammad Mustafa and Khadija had been the parents of these three girls - Zaynab, Rukayya and Umm Kulthum - they would not have given them in marriage to the worshippers of idols which the husbands of all three of them were. It is true that all three girls were married before the sun of Islam rose above the horizon; but then, Muhammad did not violate any of the imperatives of Quran Majid at any time - before or after he was ordained messenger of Allah. Muhammad never committed a pagan act at any time in his life. And Quran is explicit on the prohibition of the marriage of a .Muslim woman to a pagan

The proscriptive commandment on the marriage of a Muslim woman and a polytheist was revealed in the following verses

:of the Book of Allah

(Do not marry (your girls) to unbelievers. (Chapter ۲; verse ۲۲۱ .۱

Believing women are not lawful (wives) for the unbelievers, nor are the . ۲ ((unbelievers) lawful (husbands) for them. (Chapter ۶۰; verse ۱۰

There are other verses in Quran which, without referring specifically to marriage, make it impossible for a Muslim to give his daughter or daughters to an idolater. Some :of them are

(The curse of Allah is on those without faith. (Chapter ۲; verse ۸۹-.۱

(Allah is an enemy to those who reject faith. (Chapter ۲; verse ۹۸.... ۲

(O ye who believe! Truly the pagans are unclean. (Chapter ۹; verse ۲۸ .۳

No Muslim would be so reckless as to presume that Muhammad Mustafa contravened the prohibitions of Quran by giving his daughters to those men whom Allah has .cursed; whose enemy He is, and who are unclean

To a Muslim, the verses of Quran Majid quoted above, prove conclusively that Zaynab, Rukayya and Umm Kulthum, all three, married at one time to the idolaters, .were not the daughters of Muhammad Mustafa and Khadija

A Muslim - any Muslim - even a "marginal" or a "statistical" Muslim - will bridle if it is suggested to him that he give his daughter or daughters in marriage to an idolater or even to a Jew or a Christian. Yet the same Muslim - and the situation reeks with irony - will believe, without so much as a twinge, that his own Prophet, Muhammad Mustafa - the

Interpreter and Promulgator of Quran – gave three of his daughters to three idol-worshippers in Makka!

B. The Testimony of History

Muhammad Mustafa was extremely fond of children. He was especially fond of the children of his daughter, Fatima Zahra. Her children – Hasan and Husain – were the pupils of his eyes. He pampered them. They rode on his neck and shoulders even when he was leading public prayers. He even interrupted his speeches to play with them if they came into the mosque. When they were with him, he forgot all the burdens, cares and problems of state and government. They brought to him the happiest moments of his life. And it appeared as if he could not bestow enough encomiums upon them and their mother. It is, therefore, a matter of historical curiosity why he never mentioned Zaynab, Rukayya and Umm Kulthum at any time. The parents give same love to all their children, and do not make any distinction between them. But judging by the traditions and historical literature of the time, the Apostle was not even aware that three women called Zaynab, Rukayya and Umm Kulthum existed.

For the Messenger of Allah, the years in Makka following the Proclamation of Islam, were fraught with perils. Every day brought new perils and new challenges to him. And yet, Rukayya and Umm Kulthum are never mentioned as giving any service to their father at any time. On the other hand, his daughter, Fatima Zahra, helped him, both in Makka and

Medina, in various emergencies. Both Rukayya and Umm Kulthum were many years older than Fatima. They ought to have comforted their father whenever he was oppressed by the infidels in Makka or was wounded in battles in Medina. But they .never did

The truth made manifest both by the prohibitions of the Book of Allah, and by the logic of history, is that Rukayya and Umm Kulthum were not the daughters of Muhammad .Mustafa and Khadija

The subject of the age, the alleged marriages and the number of children of Khadija, is not one on which the faith of a Muslim depends; it does not. But a Muslim must uphold historical integrity. Khadija was the benefactress of Islam and the Muslims. The least that the Muslims can do to acknowledge their gratitude to her, is not to twist facts into pretzels still less to fabricate "facts" of their own; and to distort plain truths into conundrums. Truth must be upheld at all costs whether it benefits or hurts – .friends or foes

A man may be eager to show his loyalty to his heroes, and the cult of hero worship may prompt him to glorify them. But if he is a Muslim, he must not do so at the expense of truth. If he does, he will merit the displeasure of Allah Who says in His :Book

And cover not truth with falsehood, nor conceal the truth when ye know (what it is). .١ ((Chapter ٢; verse ۴٢

Who is more unjust than… . ٢

those who conceal the testimony they have from Allah? But Allah is not unmindful of (what ye do! (Chapter ۲; verse ۱۴۰

Those who conceal the clear (signs) We have sent down, and the guidance, after .۳ We have made it clear for the people in the book, - on them shall be Allah's curse, and (the curse of those entitled to curse, - (Chapter ۲; verse ۱۵۹

Conceal not evidence; for whoever conceals it, - his heart is tainted with sin. And .۴ (Allah knoweth all that ye do. (Chapter ۲; verse ۲۸۳

Allah has commanded Muslims to acknowledge and to express their gratitude for the .bounties He has given them

(But the bounty of thy Lord rehearse and proclaim (Chapter ۹۳; verse ۱۱

If Muslims are sincere in expressing their gratitude to Khadija, they should spike the falsehoods vis-a-vis the story of her life. These falsehoods have been in circulation for much too long. There is no better way for the Muslims to "rehearse and to proclaim" the bounty of the Lord than by giving their loyalty to Truth - to Absolute Truth. By .giving their loyalty to Truth, they will also win the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala

Khadija was the favorite slave of Allah, and the first wife of His friend and messenger, Muhammad Mustafa. She was unique; she was incomparable, and she was a "special" in the sight of Allah Who sent His greetings and salutations to her through !the Archangel Gabriel

.May Allah bless His slave, Khadija

The following

verses of Quran Majid are addressed to those sincere and loving slaves of Allah who put His pleasure ahead of their own pleasure, and who seek His pleasure in selfless .service to His Creation. Khadija was one of the foremost of those slaves of Allah

(:To the soul of the righteous will be said)

O thou soul, in (complete) rest and satisfaction! Come back thou to thy Lord, -well-" pleased (thyself), and well-pleased unto Him! Enter thou, then, among My devotees! (Yea, enter thou My heaven!" (Chapter ۸۹, verses ۲۷-۳۰

May Allah bless Khadija and may He elevate her to the highest ranks in the hierarchy .of His true and faithful friends

May Allah bless Muhammad Mustafa, and his Ahlul-Bayt. Through him mankind .received the Blessing of the Light of Islam

Chapter ۲۱: Epilogue

Khadija had made unparalleled sacrifices for Islam. Those sacrifices "dovetailed" with the infrastructure of Islam. They strengthened the edifice of Islam and made it .indestructible

Khadija's sacrifices are emblazoned in history as qualitatively and quantitatively superior to anything anyone else in the Muslim umma might have done for Islam. She made Islam viable by her countless and uncountable sacrifices. There is a clear correlation between the support she gave to her husband and the social, economic and political success of Islam. No one else could have played this role with such skill, .love, consistency, percipience, address and intuition as she did

Khadija's sacrifices bore fruit after her death. Islam was victorious in its long struggle with paganism. The enemies of Islam were decimated, the

blasphemous arrogance of the Umayyads was humbled, and their heathen ideology .was demolished

Khadija was one of the principal architects of the victory of monotheism over polytheism; of faith over materialism, and of Islam over paganism even though the story of her role in the conflict has remained, for the most part, "subliminal." It has .existed only outside the conscious awareness of most of the Muslims

In A.D. ۶۳۰ Muhammad Mustafa marched into Makka as a conqueror. He and his cousin, Ali ibn Abi Talib, entered the Kaaba, cognizant of the Divine Commandment to :Abraham and Ismael

And We covenanted with Abraham and Ismael that they should sanctify My house…… ((Chapter ۲; verse ۱۲۵))

Muhammad and Ali found the House of God in a state of defilement; it had become the house of idols; and had to be sanctified. Therefore, in imitation of Abraham and Ismael - their prophetic forebears - Muhammad and Ali smashed all the idols and obliterated all the images in the Kaaba. They sanctified the House of God, and restored purity to it. Khadija would have equated this act of the restoration of purity to the Kaaba, by her husband and her son-in-law, with the realization of her own hopes and dreams, and it would have made her happy and proud. And how much Muhammad Mustafa must have wished that she were with him, standing by his side, to experience and to share the thrill of that blessed day when the Kaaba was ,rededicated to the service of Allah

.after the passage of many dark centuries

From the moment Khadija bore witness that God was One, and Muhammad was His messenger, she put her words and her deeds and her life and her death on the same "wavelength" as the Pleasure and the Will of Allah. In correlating her work and her aims with the Pleasure and the Will of Allah, she found the Supreme Triumph of her .sainted life

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In the name of Allah

هَلْيَسْتَوِيالَّذِينَيَعْلَمُونَوَالَّذِينَلَايَعْلَمُونَ

?Are those who know equal to those who do not know

al-Zumar: ٩

:Introduction

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan, from ٢٠٠٧, under the authority of Ayatollah Haj SayyedHasanFaqihImami (God blesses his soul), by sincere and daily efforts of university and seminary elites and sophisticated groups began its activities .in religious, cultural and scientific fields

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Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan in order to facilitate and accelerate the accessibility of researchers to the books and tools of research, in the field of Islamic science, and regarding the multiplicity and dispersion of active centers in this field

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:Appreciation

We would appreciate the centers, institutes, publications, authors and all honorable .friends who contributed their help and data to us to reach the holy goal we follow

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